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THEORISING AND ANALYSING PLURIVOCALITY AND DIALOGUE IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

DISCUSSION AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DIALOGIC
PRACTICES IN A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FORUM

BOOK 1

BY
ANN STARBÆK BAGER

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2015



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Ann Starbæk Bager



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

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PhD supervisor: Professor Pirkko Liisa Raudaskoski
Aalborg University
Department of Communication

Assistant PhD supervisor: Professor (with specific responsibilities)
Kenneth Mølbjerg Jørgensen
Aalborg University
Department of Philosophy and Learning

PhD committee: Associate Professor Anders Horsbøl
Aalborg University (chair)
Department of Communication

Professor Rick Iedema
University of Tasmania
Australia

Associate Professor Birgitte Ravn Olesen
Roskilde University
Department of Communication, Business and
Information Technologies

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CV

Ann Starbæk Bager received her master's degree in Communication within Human-centred Informatics from Aalborg University in 2007. In continuation of a collaborative research process with a Danish municipality as part of her master's thesis, she was employed as a team leader of their team strategy. In this position, she worked with development of leadership and organizational practices. Through this position, she acquired insights into challenges on everyday leadership matters which form the basis of the present PhD dissertation. Since 2009, she has been employed as an Assistant Professor and PhD Scholar in the Department of Communication and Psychology at Aalborg University. Her areas of research are Organizational and Leadership studies: applying a dissensus-based approach that embraces ethical matters, plural meaning-making and complexities inherent in everyday organizational life. She teaches and supervises in organizational discourse studies, participatory studies and theories of communication, organization, dialogue, power and leadership. She has recently published articles in which she embraces discourse analysis of situated leadership development practices and Foucauldian, Deleuzian and Bakhtinian perspectives: bringing both the broader and the concrete discursive dimensions together when grasping organizational matters.

<http://www.mattering.aau.dk/>.



RESUME IN ENGLISH

In this thesis, I explore, analyse and discuss plurivocal meaning-making practices in a dialogue- and research-based leadership forum hosted in university settings, which I helped initiate and hold in the spring and autumn 2012. The purpose of the study is to scrutinize and challenge the taken-for-grantedness of dialogic organizational development practices. Dialogue has become a mainstream (organizational) discourse and technique within development practices throughout society and is often naturally seen as a positive phenomenon with attached ideals of emancipation and involvement (Bager, 2013, 2014; Bager et al, forthcoming; Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Linell, 2009; Märtsin et al, 2011; Phillips, 2011). Nevertheless, scholars clarify how mainstream dialogic development practices rarely follow suit with a deep theorization of the concept dialogue; likewise, (organizational) dialogic practices are not commonly placed under scrutiny, which means that we know little about the consequences of such (Bager, 2013, 2014; Linell, 2009; Phillips, 2011; Phillips et al, 2012). The present research offers an in-depth theorization of dialogue through the lens of Bakhtinian dialogicality, accompanied by an analysis of in situ dialogic practicing and identity work in the leadership forum. In contrast to traditional dialogue analysis, I study dialogue as an embodied place-bound activity.

The participatory leadership forum involved a diverse set of participants: ten leaders from various organizations in the North of Jutland, sporadic participation of communication students undertaking their master's program and five interdisciplinary researchers from the areas of philosophy, learning and communication at the University of Aalborg. The forum followed principles from collaborative research (the dialogic tradition of (AR)) and was positioned as *dialogic studies* (Deetz, 2001) by a democratic research team that engaged with the forum. This means that the group aspired to enact a dissensus-based forum through the staging and facilitation of multivoiced sub-practices as parts of overall ongoing research processes. The ambition was to counter what can be termed as a tyranny of concepts (Bager, 2014; Rennison, 2011) in today's organizations in which researchers and change agents tend to impose complex-reducing and often linear views on communication with attached models and recipes for how to perform, streamline and make more efficient organizational practices. On the contrary, we wanted to pay attention to the leaders' living experiences, challenges and successes and harvest their stories and discourses in order to co-create knowledge with an intention to build practice-based theory. A basic ideal was to experiment with new plurivocal research practices.

The overall methodological (theoretical, philosophical and analytical) aim of the present dissertation is to combine an organizational discourse analytical purview with ideals from participatory research strategies. Bakhtinian dialogicality serves as an intermediary that mediates between broader discursive elements (cf.

governmentality, *dispositifs* and authoritative discourses) and local dialogic accomplishments (cf. Bakhtin's once-occurring being of event). Thus, the study at hand represents an interdisciplinary and plurivocal frame that draws on a multiplicity of voices, discourses and perspectives from a diversity of research fields in the forming of what Nicolini (2009) refers to as a 'toolkit-logic' in order to capture the multivoicedness and heteroglossic nature of practices and interaction (cf. Bakhtinian dialogicality).

The thesis is article based, which means that it consists of two separate yet interrelated parts: Book 1 presents the outcome of my research and displays what new knowledge this gives rise to and what future activities it invites. First, I present the eclectic methodological frame that draws on a multiplicity of theoretical and philosophical voices. After this, I explain the leadership forum through an analysis of the research process, placing it in its sociopolitical circumstances. Then I present my close discourse analytical findings. The overall analytical findings reveal an interesting resemiotization process (Iedema, 2003). Part of the process is how different voices and discourses are transformed/translated into a diversity of modes, providing insights into crucial positionings, decision makings and processual aspects of the participatory research process. Based on the recurring philosophical, theoretical and analytical discussions in the thesis, I elaborate an ethics of dialogue that prepares the grounds for researchers and change agents to engage in doing organizational discourse activism: meaning that a discourse purview becomes an active component in participatory research strategies in which the researcher is positioned as involved and active in organizational change processes.

Book 2 encompasses a collection of five research papers that represent the most significant explanations of my work. The first two papers clarify the theoretical and philosophical foundation through which Bakhtinian dialogicality runs as a red thread supplemented with reflections from Organizational Discourse Studies (ODS), including Foucauldian studies. Thereto they outline crucial points made by a range of scholars that engage dialogicality in their perception of organizational practices, clarifying how this perspective requires a change of attitude in traditional organizational studies toward the unfinalized, ambiguous and often contradictory aspects of organizational meaning-making. The combination of Bakhtinian dialogicality and Foucauldian studies offers a potent analytical frame that straddles multiple dimensions of interaction. The following three analytical articles display, among other things, how the participants in the situated embodied interaction in the forum co-produce complex trajectories of meta-levels, other-orientation and temporal multiplicity that affect the co-production of identity. In these interactional co-accomplishments, battles of opposing discourses within dominant leadership studies co-emerge, indicating leadership as a complex and ambiguous phenomenon. What I found particularly interesting is how the practices (embodied setups) in some parts of the processes seem to further the intended plurivocal and dissensus-based ideals while others appear to stimulate the direct opposite. This gives rise to an ethics of dialogue that invites researchers and change agents to study their own

dialogic practices up close in order to become smarter at designing more egalitarian organizational practices.

RESUME PÅ DANSK

I denne afhandling studerer, analyserer og diskuterer jeg flerstemmig dialogiske praksisser i relation til et forskningsbaseret ledelsesforum, som jeg var med til at initiere og afholde i 2012. Formålet med forskningen er at granske og udfordre antagelser om organisatoriske dialogiske udviklingspraksisser som værende naturlige positive fænomener. Dialog bliver i stadig stigende grad en mainstream (organisatorisk) diskurs og teknik, der flittigt tages i brug, når der skal problemløses i en lang række samfundsmæssige praksisser. Dialog ses ofte som et positivt fænomen, der bygger på frigørende og involverende idealer (Bager, 2013, 2014; Bager et al, forthcoming; Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Linell, 2009; Märtsin et al, 2011; Phillips, 2011). Ikke desto mindre peger en række forskere på, hvordan sådanne dialogiske praksisser sjældent følger trop med en dybdegående teoretisering. De peger yderligere på, at (organisatoriske) dialogiske praksisser sjældent nærstuderes, hvilket betyder, at vi ved forholdsvis lidt om de konsekvenser, der følger heraf (Bager, 2013, 2014; Linell, 2009; Phillips, 2011; Phillips et al, 2012). Nærværende forskning tilbyder netop en dybdegående teoretisering af fænomenet dialog, gennem Bakhtin's konceptualisering af dialogicitet, ledsaget af analyser af dialogiske situationelle praksisser og identitetsarbejde i lederforummet. I modsætning til traditionelle dialoganalytiske tilgange studeres dialog som 'embodied' kontekstbestemte aktiviteter.

Det participatoriske lederforum involverede en diversitet af deltagere: 10 ledere fra forskellige organisationer i Nordjylland, sporadisk deltagelse af kandidatstuderende fra kommunikation og tværfaglige forskere fra filosofi, læring og kommunikation ved Aalborg Universitet. Forummet fulgte principper fra kollaborativ forskning (fx fra den dialogiske aktionsforskningstradition) og blev positioneret som *dialogiske studier* (Deetz, 2001) af et initierende demokratisk forskerteam. Det betyder, at teamet ønskede at iscenesætte et dissensus-baseret forum bestående af flerstemmige subprocesser som dele af et overordnet forskningsprojekt. Ambitionen var at imødegå, hvad der kan betegnes som et koncepttyranni (Bager, 2014, Rennison, 2011) i dagens organisationer, hvor forskere og forandringsagenter har tendens til at pålægge kompleksitetsreducerende og ofte lineære syn på kommunikation med vedhæftede modeller og opskrifter til, hvordan man udfører, strømliner og effektiviserer organisatoriske praksisser. Tværtimod var ønsket at fokusere på ledernes oplevelser, udfordringer og succeser med formålet om at høste fortællinger og diskurser og derved samskabe viden om ledelseskommunikative praksisser. Dette med en hensigt om at bygge praksisbaseret teori på sigt. Et grundlæggende ideal var at eksperimentere med nye flerstemmige forskningspraksisser.

Det overordnede metodologiske (teoretiske, filosofiske og analytiske) formål med afhandlingen er at kombinere et organisatorisk diskursanalytisk sigte med idealer fra partcipatoriske forskningsstrategier. Bakhtin's dialogicitet tjener som et mellemled, der medierer mellem bredere diskursive elementer (Governmentality, dispositifs og autoritative diskurser) og lokale dialogiske situationer (Bakhtin's once-occurring being of event). Forskningen repræsenterer derved en tværfaglig og polyfonisk ramme, der trækker på en mangfoldighed af stemmer, diskurser og perspektiver fra forskellige forskningsområder. Derved arbejder jeg ud fra det, som Nicolini (2009) benævner en "værktøjskasse-logik" for at fange den flerstemmige (heteroglossic) karakter af praksis og interaktion (Bakhtinian dialogicality).

Afhandlingen er artikelbaseret, hvilket betyder, at den består af to separate men indbyrdes forbundne dele: Bog 1 viser resultatet af min forskning og den nye viden, den giver anledning til, samt hvilke fremtidige aktiviteter, den fordrer. Som det første elaborerer jeg min eklektiske metodologiske ramme, der trækker på en mangfoldighed af teoretiske og filosofiske stemmer. Herefter beskriver jeg ledelsesforummet, hvilket indebærer en analyse af forskningsprocessen, der samtidigt synliggør nogle af de socialpolitiske forhold. Derpå viser jeg diskursanalytiske pointer fra næranalyse af dialogiske praksisser i forummet. De overordnede analytiske fund afslører en interessant resemiotiseringsproces (Iedema, 2003). Denne involverer, hvordan forskellige stemmer og diskurser transformeres til en mangfoldighed af 'modes', der giver indsigt i afgørende positioneringer, beslutningsprocesser og processuelle aspekter af den partcipatoriske forskningsproces. Baseret på de gennemgående filosofiske, teoretiske og analytiske diskussioner i afhandlingen formulerer jeg en dialogetik. Jeg argumenterer videre for, hvordan denne dialogetik kan gøde jorden for en metodologisk ramme til at udføre organisatorisk diskurs aktivisme: hvilket betyder, at diskursigtet gøres til en aktiv komponent i partcipatoriske forskningsstrategier, i hvilke forskere er placeret som involverede og aktive i organisatoriske forandringsprocesser.

Bog 2 omfatter en samling af fem forskningsartikler, der repræsenterer de væsentligste argumenter i mit forskningsarbejde i relation til afhandlingen. De første to artikler klarlægger det teoretiske og filosofiske fundament, hvorigennem Bakhtin's dialogicitet løber som en rød tråd suppleret med refleksioner fra Organisatoriske Diskursstudier (ODS), herunder Foucauldianske studier. Dertil skitseres, hvordan Bakhtin's dialogicitet kræver en organisatorisk holdningsændring, der fx afviger fra gængse måder at forstå organisatorisk 'meaning making' på. Dialogicitet retter fokus mod ambivalenser, tvetydigheder og ofte modstridende aspekter af organisatorisk praksis. Kombinationen mellem Bakhtiniansk dialogicitet og Foucauldianske studier tilbyder en potent analytisk ramme, der spænder over flere interaktionelle dimensioner. De følgende tre analytiske artikler viser blandt andet, hvordan deltagerne i forummet samproducerer komplekse mønstre af 'meta-niveauer', 'otherness' og 'temporal multiplicitet', der påvirker identitetsarbejdet. Analysen af de samskabende interaktionelle bedrifter viser, hvordan modstående diskurser, indenfor dominerende ledelsesstudier, emergerer i interaktionen. Derved fremstår ledelse

som et komplekst og flertydigt fænomen. Det findes særligt interessant, hvordan 'embodied' praksisser i nogle dele af processerne synes at fremme de tilsigtede flerstemmige og dissensus-baserede idealer, mens andre synes at stimulere de direkte modsatte. Det giver anledning til en dialogetik, der inviterer forskere og forandringsagenter til at nærstudere egne dialogiske praksisser med formålet om at blive stadigt bedre til at designe mere egalitære og polyfoniske organisatoriske praksisser.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, READING GUIDELINES AND OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS

This dissertation offers a study of dialogue-based organizational and leadership development practices mainly through an eclectic multifaceted methodological frame in which the lens of Bakhtinian dialogicality is an anchor. It answers my research questions of how to *frame, stage, manage* and *analyse* plurivocal dialogues and discusses this research's *implications for organizational and leadership studies*.

The present research primarily contributes to the field of Organizational Discourse Studies (ODS) as outlined by Grant and Iedema (2005) and Iedema (2011). In ODS, organizational scholars increasingly draw on discourse perspectives in order to assist organizational change. The dissertation also draws inspiration from Foucauldian studies and scholars that refine the Foucauldian thoughts (Agamben, Deleuze), discourse psychology (Bamberg), participatory research strategies (dialogic tradition of AR; e.g. Palshaugen, Gustavsen) and dialogue studies (Bakhtin, Linell). Within organizational studies, I position my research as *dialogic studies* encompassing ideals of *dissensus* and plurivocality that aim to study and challenge existing organizational patterns in order to further plurivocal and innovative practices (Deetz, 2001). I present a plurivocal innovative methodological frame that straddles both the broader dimensions of discourse and the local in situ discursive accomplishments. As such, it represents a critical-reflexive approach that focuses both on the complexities and tensions immanent in dialogic co-production of knowledge and identity and at the same time aspires to develop dialogue-based practices from a position that normatively supports dialogue. It encompasses philosophical, ethical, theoretical, analytical and normative aspects and invites organizational researchers and change agents to place their own dialogic methods under scrutiny to become more ethically responsible furthering more plurivocal and egalitarian organizational practices.

The purpose of Book 1 of the PhD thesis is many-sided as it 1) sums up the outcomes of my research as represented in the five research papers and 2) allows me to go into depth with methodological aspects that the paper genre does not allow due to scope and space concerns. For instance, it provides a space for me to unfold theoretical as well as other aspects of the research process and findings that are not included in the papers. In addition, it 3) offers me a possibility to outline these research findings as a whole and discuss what knowledge and which anticipatory future events they gives rise to. Finally, 4) it allows me to saturate the conceptualization and the retrospective making sense of the research process and findings with my own experience and backstage insights, which, as we will see, reveals my inspiration from the auto-ethnographic gazing.

A basic assumption of the thesis is that dialogue as meaning-making is a messy and tensional affair in which ambiguities and often contradictory consciousnesses, voices and discourses battle, co-emerge and co-exist in the *heteroglossic nature of the language of life* (Bakhtin, 1982, 1986). Nevertheless the written genre of a PhD dissertation requires me to provide a tentatively cohesive attempt to arrange the fragments and ambiguities of, in my case, five years of action-packed PhD studies and research outcomes in a rather linear narrative form. This is quite a challenge that can be dealt with in multiple ways. My choice of arrangement reflects the above-mentioned multifaceted research question and purposes.

The present **Chapter one** provides a reading guideline and an overview of the five research papers assisted by a short introduction of their main points.

Chapter two answers the first part of the research question, which concerns *how to frame* plurivocal dialogue in relation to organizational and leadership studies. It clarifies my understanding of organizational meaning-making practices and the broader discursive circumstances that affect its complex (re)constituent processes. As such, this chapter provides the multithreaded theoretical and philosophical dialogic fabric and backdrop against which the remaining chapters of Book 1 will be discussed. Furthermore, this chapter positions my research according to dialogue, discourse and organisational studies and provides insights into my methodological approach.

In **Chapter three**, I address *how to stage and manage plurivocal dialogue* as means for developing and co-creating knowledge on leadership practices. This includes an elaboration of the leadership forum and some of the sociopolitical circumstances. The chapter further starts to answer the question of *how to analyse plurivocal dialogue* as it provides an analysis of the research process which, for instance, includes an elaboration of how the democratic research team drew on ideals from AR and handled a diversity of data. The process analysis further reveals an interesting resemiotization process in which a diversity of modes are translated into others. The analysis shows pivotal patterns of positionings as, for instance, the creation of a pre-set expert and knowledge hierarchy, which positions the participant types in predefined roles.

In **Chapter four**, I carry on answering my research question of *how to analyse plurivocal dialogue* as I present the main points from the close-up discourse analyses as reflected in three of the research papers. This section reveals how I study and analyse five examples of dialogic encounters up-close in the leadership forum. The chapter outlines two diverse frameworks for close-up embodied discourse analysis building on the ethnomethodological purview. It further displays how I prepared video recordings from the leadership forum for close-up discourse analysis. The close-up analysis extends the resemiotization process to encompass how the expert and knowledge hierarchy and the pre-set positions were actualized in the situated embodied encounters.

In **Chapter five**, I zoom out and trail connections from the analytical findings to broader discursive circumstances showing what new knowledge and anticipated future research activities the previous analyses raise. The discussions outlined serve to answer the part of my research question on *which implications plurivocal dialogue has for leadership and organizational studies* based on the analytical findings. The chapter ends by forming an ethics of dialogue that encourages organizational researchers and change agents to scrutinize their own dialogic development practices in order to become more ethically responsible and better at furthering more egalitarian and plurivocal organizational practices.

Chapter six provides a provisional conclusion on what can be inferred from the research findings elaborated throughout the thesis. I conclude that my methodological frame has proven to be potent and explains how points from the philosophical, theoretical and analytical discussions can prepare the grounds for a future methodological frame for enacting organizational discourse activism. Doing so requires that discourse scholars become actively involved in changing organizational practices and experiment with new procedures for doing dissensus-based and plurivocal participatory research furthering more direct researcher-researched engagement.

SUMMARY OF FIVE PUBLICATIONS

During the five-year research process, I have naturally gained surpluses of seeing and insights into my topic of study through continuous *accommodation of otherness* (Bager, 2013, 2014), which is reflected in the ongoing nuancement of arguments in the five research papers. This progress is reflected throughout the chapters as it becomes relevant, and I will continuously indicate which article I paraphrase and refer to according to the overview and numbering below. This also means that, when not noted, the points and reflections in the present ‘linking’ thesis provides surpluses of seeing, which are not reflected in the five research papers.

1. *Dialogue on dialogues: multivoiced dialogues (dialogism) as means for the co-production of knowledge in and on leadership communicative practices* (Bager, 2013 – paper 1)
 - a. Article in peer-reviewed online e-journal: Academic quarter at Aalborg University: in special issue on leadership, edited by Hanne Dauer Keller:
http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol6/AnnSBager_DialogueOnDialogues.pdf
2. *Theorizing plurivocal dialogue: implications for organizational and leadership studies* (Bager, 2014 – paper 2)
 - a. Book chapter in peer-reviewed e-book: Participation and power: in participatory and action research: in series in Transformational Studies at Aalborg University Press, edited by Marianne Kristiansen and Jørgen Bloch Poulsen:
http://vbn.aau.dk/files/204018532/Participating_and_Power_In_Participatory_Research_And_Action_Research.pdf
3. *Dialogue and governmentality-in-action: a discourse analysis of a leadership forum* (Bager, Jørgensen, & Raudaskoski, in review – paper 3) for review at John Benjamins Publishing after two internal book revision rounds at Aalborg University.
 - a. Book chapter in peer-reviewed book: New perspectives on discourse and governmentality at John Benjamins Publishing, edited by Paul MCIlvenny, Julia Zhukova Klausen, and Laura Bang Lindegaard.
4. *Organizational (auto)-ethnography: an interaction analysis of identity work through the study of other-orientation and storytelling practices in a leadership development forum* (Bager, accepted – paper 4)
 - a. Article in peer-reviewed journal: Tamara journal for critical organizational inquiry: in special issue on doing organizational ethnography: work, politics and organizational storytelling, edited by Kenneth Jørgensen and Lars Bo Henriksen.

5. *Embodied positioning/discourse analysis of a research based leadership development forum: showing identity as in situ accomplishment* (Bager, submitted – paper 5)
 - a. Article for peer-reviewed international e-journal: Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal

Paper 1 is theoretical and methodological as I mostly outline the basics of Bakhtinian dialogicality and discuss its potential for the framing of plurivocal organizational and leadership practices as well as its differences from other ways of framing organizational dialogue (e.g. liberal humanistic and critical hermeneutic approaches). I position the research as *dialogic studies* (Deetz, 2001) within organizational approaches, which means that it is dissensus-based and sees organizational meaning-making as full of ambiguities, contradictory voices and discourses. I also present an empirical scrutiny of dialogic practices as means for understanding and theorizing practice.

In **paper 2**, I mention a range of organizational scholars showing some of the implications dialogicality has for understanding organizational practicing. These implications include a change in organizational attitude that counters mainstream and consensus-relying perspectives. I draw inspiration from Foucauldian studies and indicate similarities between Foucault's concept *dispositif* and Bakhtin's *authoritative discourse*. The paper displays thought-provoking research points and findings by Foucauldian scholars and critical management studies, indicating how positive discourses often cover up contradictory and not-so-appealing organizational discourses and attached ideologies. In this paper, I further clarify how we drew inspiration from the dialogic tradition of AR in the design of the leadership forum. I discuss and criticize the principles drawn from this tradition through the lens of dialogicality from a merely theoretical and ideological position. This shows, for instance, how the use of a theatre metaphor and a role distribution model potentially locks the researchers and participants in pre-scripted roles, not allowing the emergence of alternative participation positions and new ways of doing participatory research. Thereto I criticize the dialogic tradition's heritage from critical hermeneutics and the Habermasian understanding of dialogue and its overreliance on rational people making rational decisions in specially designed decision-making spaces.

Together, the two first papers mostly elaborate the theoretical and methodological discussions and the foundation of the present research, as well as point to close-up analysis as an empirical method. The latter three articles present close-up discourse analysis of video data from the leadership forum. Thereby the articles *zoom in* on dialogue as accomplished in situ, after which they *zoom out* again as the concrete findings are related to broader discursive circumstances and aspects addressed in my theoretical and philosophical frame. All three articles embrace embodied

interaction analysis drawing inspiration from Goodwin's (2000) *contextual configurations*.

Paper 3 nuances the affinities between Bakhtinian and Foucauldian thoughts. Bakhtinian trust in the subject's innate capacity to bring new flavour to dialogue (Bakhtin, 1982) is extended by introducing Deleuze's refinement of Foucault's concept *dispositif* as consisting of four types of metaphoric lines. One of them is *lines of subjectification*, explained as *lines of escape* (Deleuze, 1992). This shifts the traditional Foucauldian distanced and retrospective gazing toward the becoming of something new, which spotlights the possible change of lines of subjectification into alternative and possible better ones. This change gives rise to an ethics of dialogue, meaning that researchers ought to become more engaged in understanding the current organizational practices and potentially changing subjectification processes which in the longer run transform organizational *dispositifs* and authoritative discourses. My co-authors and I set out to study governmentality-in-action in the leadership forum through a close-up analysis of video data by combining Linell's (2009) dialogicality-inspired *quadruple model* for dialogue analysis with tools from *Membership Categorization Analysis* to uncover the naturalized embodied category-bound identity work the participants engage in and to see which interactional consequences it produces. The analysis shows the strength of the scenic incumbency in university settings by scrutinizing the opening embodied interaction setup in the leadership forum that is staged as a traditional lecture. We found that theoretical voices and the embodied setup seem to narrow down for diversity and everyday voices (cf. centripetal and monologizing forces) and categories. Thus, the setup appears to oppose the intended ideals of the forum.

Paper 4 links up to organizational ethnography including auto-ethnography and reflects another way to conduct close discourse analysis than in paper 3. The analytical frame is constructed by combining Linell's quadruple model with analytical tools and strategies from discursive psychology and positioning theory, more precisely from small story analysis as presented by Bamberg and Georgapoulou (2008). This frame spotlights how the participants' small story efforts reveal an orientation toward discourses and voices from outside of the creative event as they *accommodate otherness* (Bager, 2014) and surpluses of seeing. I display how opposing discourses within dominant leadership theory battle and co-exist in dialogue. Through analysis of two additional video sequences, I show how two diverse embodied interaction setups prompt diverse patterns of interaction, resulting in diverse lines of subjectification and identity work: a narrative and rather researcher-controlled embodied interview setup with a pre-scripted role cast seems to restrict diversity (cf. centripetal forces) more than a dialogue round without pre-scripted role definitions. The latter seems to open up more to diversifying (cf. centrifugal) forces. The auto-ethnographic purview allows me to saturate the discourse analysis with insider and backstage insights that add important processual and context-dependent knowledge to the analysis that cannot be seen by merely analysing the video data. As such, the ethnographic analysis gives insights into procedures and the everyday-ness of a leadership development

forum conducted in a contemporary organization (a Danish university) in what Deleuze (1995) conceptualizes as *the society of control*.

In **paper 5**, I conduct yet another discourse analysis of video data from diverse parts of a positioning exercise using a similar analytical frame as employed in paper 4. This analysis shows how interesting and complex trajectories of meta-levels, other-orientation and temporal multiplicity emerge in interaction. It pictures meaning-making and dialogue as ambiguous embattled sites in which participants invoke a multiplicity of voices and discourses from outside of the creative event and link up to temporal features from the past, in the present, and in anticipation of the future as part of doing identity. The findings show how the participants invoke diverse and often opposing discourses from dominant discourses in organizational and leadership literature and how these seem to co-exist and collide in the accounts of their everyday activities and views on leadership communicative practices. These findings tap into perspectives that embrace paradoxical, ambivalent and plurivocal features of leadership and organizational meaning-making practices.

The analyses in the latter three articles picture leadership as a complex, paradoxical and ambiguous phenomenon in which diverse and often contradictory discourses and voices battle and co-exist. The research findings further give rise to discussions on researchers' and change agents' ethical demand to study their own embodied organizational development practices to see and reflect upon the consequences of such. As noted by a range of scholars and as confirmed through my analysis, such development practices might not always further the intended ideals and sometimes even promote the direct opposite. This contradiction invites an ethics of dialogue inciting, for instance, discourse scholars to enact *discourse activism* and engage in a reflective change of inappropriate embodied discursive practices – a discussion that I elaborate throughout the thesis.

Before proceeding with the remaining chapters, I find that it is important to clarify an apparent contradiction. I am aware of a widely used English distinction between the concepts *leadership* and *management* within organizational literature. For instance, Kotter states, "Management is about coping with complexity. Leadership, by contrast, is about coping with change" (Kotter, 2001). He couples management practices with the handling of complexity in everyday organizational operational tasks and ties leadership to a more strategic and political organizational level and stresses the importance of both. In the Danish language, we do not have the same distinction, but I sometimes find the distinction between "ledelse" and "lederskab" in organizational literature ("Lederskab 1 (Ledelse Mandag)", 2011) where the former seems to connote that of the English term "management" and the latter "leadership". I choose to combine the two using the term "leadership" as I often find, from my own former leadership experience and from other leaders' accounts, that the two aspects merge in organizational practicing and therefore cannot be separated clearly. For instance, in my experiences of the relatively democratic Danish work life, such as in team-based organizations, team leaders partake in both dimensions of doing organizational leadership. The leaders in the leadership forum

represent a diversity of embodied experience from both middle leader and top leader positions, and they seem to share similar challenges in relation to their own leadership communicative practices. As a result, I do not find it productive or necessary to make such distinctions. I also avoid using mainstream organizational category-bound differentiations such as *micro*, *meso* and *macro* that indicate separate levels of organizational meaning-making. As I will explain in more detail later in the thesis, I find traces of one in the others. By eschewing these terms, I study what actually becomes relevant in interaction in the attempt not to overlook aspects of meaning-making that fall out of or in between categories.

CHAPTER 2

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL MULTITHREADED DIALOGIC FABRIC

“There is neither a first nor last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even *past* meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) - they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue’s subsequent development along the way they are recalled and reinvigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival”. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 170)

In this chapter, I answer the first part of my research question regarding *how to frame plurivocal dialogue in relation to organizational and leadership studies*. I outline my methodological frame, which involves my theoretical and philosophical foundation, and research strategies reflected in the discussions and analyses throughout the rest of the thesis. I unveil how I position my research in the field of organizational and leadership studies.

A toolkit logic and dialogic studies

The basic aspiration of this thesis is to understand and study organizational meaning-making practices (dialogue) by embracing the tensional, multivoiced, subtle and profound complexities that shroud everyday (re)configuration of doing organization. As means for studying such heterogeneous aspects of organizational meaning-making and identity work, I have found it inevitable to construct a plurivocal frame – a multithreaded dialogic fabric – that allows me to straddle multiple dimensions of organizational meaning-making. This framework follows what Nicolini (2009a, 2009b) refers to as a “toolkit-logic” in order to capture the multivoicedness and heteroglossic nature of practices and interaction (cf. Bakhtinian dialogicality). I perceive theories as an *assemblage of tools* (Lemke, 2005), which is in contrast to approaches that imagine theory as a set of a priori truths. It entails the somewhat obvious notion that theory changes when brought into use in a particular inquiry and by a particular researcher. Within organizational studies, this way of perceiving theory and research can be situated as *dialogic studies* (Deetz, 2001) and described by Deetz (2001) through the metaphor of a *lens*, stressing the shifting analytical attempt to see what could not be seen before and showing the researcher as positioned and active. I choose to refine the metaphor into a *two-sided lens*, which frames how I see the ideal correlation and

connection between theory and practice. Specifically, I hold that theory and concepts are always reflections on practice constructed by the theorist, and they should act as tools for understanding, reflecting and continuously enriching practice and vice versa. The two-sidedness of the lens indicates a close interrelatedness between theory and practice, as I believe that they ideally co-evolve through ongoing interaction and mutual observations in the *heteroglossic nature of the language of life* (cf. Bakhtin's dialogicality), enriching one another as we co-create and accumulate knowledge.

The above-mentioned perception of theory and its implications for research claims the importance of a *knowing how* dimension to enter more into the *knowing that* (Ryle, 2000) conceptualizing and theorizing of organizational practices. It follows what Nicolini (2009a, 2009b) refers to as a *return to practice* in organizational and management studies, in which organizational practices are brought to the fore and researchers more strongly re-ground situated practices in their theorizing and the conceptualization of organizational practices.

Aspiration to bridge the gaps between organizational doings and sayings

The research aims to bring "*the real*" back in (Iedema, 2007) and bridge the chasms often existing between organizational doings, written documents and sayings. Piggybacking on a range of scholars that build on Foucauldian thoughts, I outline (Bager, 2014 – article 2) how seemingly positive and mainstream discourses, such as of dialogue, tend to cover up not-so-appealing ideals and rationalities. For example, Iedema (2003) identifies how employees in healthcare settings increasingly "talk" their jobs and how organizations have adopted the rhetoric from post-bureaucratic discourses while simultaneously maintaining traditional top-down discourses. This combination creates tensions between the aspirations of the former and traditional work practices which can be traced through inconsistencies between organizational "talk" and "walk". Thereto Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) point to what they term *discursive smartness*, highlighting the thought-provoking fact that organizational members, such as leaders, tend to cleverly know what is appropriate to stress discursively (discourse as language use) but often perform other, even contradictory, actions. Currently organizational reality is increasingly exposed to functionalistic management concepts (Deetz, 2001) in order to streamline and make more efficient organizational practices, such as new public management strategies, the goals of which are those of an advanced liberal state (Bager, 2014 – paper 2; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Karlsen & Villadsen, 2008). Such streamlining concepts tend to reduce the complexities and inconsistencies inherent in organizational meaning-making, ignoring the polyphony in which often contradictory discourses co-exist and battle. This reveals what could be called "Orwellian organizational doublespeak" in which often positive and "smart" discourses disguise the nature of organizational practices.

Dissensus and organizational discourse activism

The research seeks to address the differences between organizational doings and sayings and unmask the tensional, fragmented, plurivocal and ambiguous aspects of organizational meaning-making in order to disrupt and challenge assumptions and possibly change the reified and habitual ways of performing everyday activities. The research is dissensus-based (Deetz, 2001) as it considers struggle, conflict and tensions as premises representing natural organizational states. Consequently, research is inevitably seen as a move in a conflictual site.

I link up to a growing body of research within organizational discourse studies in which organizational scholars increasingly draw inspiration from discourse approaches in developing organizational practices. Instead of merely producing discourse analysis of diverse aspects of organizational meaning-making, discourse and the researcher(s) become driving powers and active components in the change of organizational practices (Grant & Iedema, 2005; Iedema, 2011, submitted). This approach offers interesting aspects to traditional discourse studies that tend to privilege distanced and retrospective analytical gazing, often resulting in analytical reports, and pay less attention to participatory development of local discursive practices (Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted). On the 2nd New Zealand Discourse Conference held in the autumn 2009 in Auckland,¹ Rick Iedema addressed this turn toward fostering development of situated practices within discourse studies. He termed it *discourse activism* and invited for more discourse scholars to engage in such developmental research and discourse-based activities. In this thesis, I present my contribution to this field as I conclude the thesis by giving my recommendations for a methodological framework for doing organizational discourse activism based on the continuously philosophical, theoretical and analytical discussions.

As already mentioned, my methodological frame is plurivocal and embraces inspiration from diverse research approaches such as organizational studies, discourse studies, ethnography, auto-ethnography, participatory research and ethnomethodology. Central to all these perspectives and their inherent research ideals is their inductive ambition to see what actually goes on in situated encounters. They all have an immanent quest to focus attention on subjectification processes as they are actualized and understand cultural specific norms and procedures from bottom up. From empirical analyses, we create our understanding of meaning-making practices and draw lines to broader societal circumstances. As we shall see, I conduct an auto-ethnographic-inspired analysis of the leadership forum as part of an AR process with the intention to co-create plurivocal and dissensus-based knowledge on leadership communicative practices. As part of this analysis, I combine a process and resemiotization analysis with close-up discourse analyses of situated encounters and then zoom out from the findings, tracing

¹ <http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=ca1mhsm3>

connections to broader discursive circumstances. These analyses are continuously reflected through the lenses of dialogicality and governmentality. The overall analytical findings show how the dialogic encounters in the leadership forum overtly further the opposite ideals than the intended dissensus-based and plurivocal ones. Arriving from these findings, I argue for an ethics of dialogue among other things and prepare the grounds for doing anticipated organizational discourse activism.

In the following, I unfold the theoretical and methodological dialogic fabric of the dissertation, thus clarifying the scope and range of my perspective(s) and multifaceted lens. In doing so, I posit how my particular eclectic combination allows me to straddle multiple dimensions spanning from the broader discourses in societal and organizational circumstances to the local discursive co-accomplishments in situated practices. These diverse dimensions of discourse are often referred to as respectively Discourse with a capital *D* and discourse with a lowercase *d* within discourse studies (Gee, 2014), and the former is often emphasized over the latter within discourse literature (Bager et al, in review – paper 3). The main reason for my eclectic approach is that I find that the diverse perspectives complement each other and give voice to diverse aspects of organizational plurivocal meaning-making that together allow me to provide a varied and, to the extent it is possible, full analysis. For instance, traditional dialogue studies have little to say analytically about the broader organizational circumstances, and traditional Foucauldian studies have little to offer in the analysis of situated dialogic encounters (Bager, accepted – paper 4; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Bager et al, in review – paper 3). In combination, I have found that they extend each other's analytical gazes and philosophical insights (Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5) – a discussion which I will elaborate on in the following chapters. I now turn to the theoretical and philosophical open-ended dialogic fabric. Given the flexible nature of this thesis, chapter three provides an examination of the case that may be read before the following methodological and theoretical basis if desired.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

In the forming of my multivoiced framework, I stand on the shoulders of giants invoking voices and insights from past and present scholars. Bakhtinian dialogicality runs as the red thread throughout my studies, and I supplement it with perspectives from respectively ODS, Foucauldian studies (and scholars that refine the Foucauldian thoughts e.g. Deleuze) and discursive psychology (especially positioning and small story analysis (Bamberg, 1997; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008)). I will shortly turn to the basics of Bakhtinian thinking, after which I supplement with selected perspectives from Foucauldian studies to nuance my framing of the broader aspects of discourse.

The theoretical and philosophical arguments in this chapter are reflected in all the five research papers. A retrospective chronological reading of the papers reveals how I continuously refine and supplement these arguments and their interrelatedness, steadily weaving new threads into the dynamic dialogic fabric as I continuously accommodate otherness and *knowing how* insights in relation to the perspectives and their entangled practicability.

Dialogicality: a fundamental dialogic worldview

“Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium”. (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293)

Following Bakhtinian thinking, a fundamental dialogic worldview takes shape. To Bakhtin, meaning-making is fundamentally dialogic, and we co-create mind, self and the world through intense entanglement with others. Meaning-making and identity work are polyphonic and tensional affairs in which a multiplicity of *consciousnesses*, *voices* and *discourses* battle, co-emerge and co-exist.

Heteroglossia: centripetal and centrifugal forces

As elaborated in Bager (2013 – paper 1), the metaphor of a battle involves a state (of mind and of social interaction) full of tensions, conflicts and opposing voices as every utterance “is a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 271). These embattled tendencies are the *centripetal force* – toward unity – and the *centrifugal force* – toward difference. The centripetal force crystallizes “into languages that are social-ideological: languages of social groups, ‘professional’ and ‘generic’ languages, languages of generations and so forth” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 271). The centripetal force (monologism) draws toward normative-centralizing systems and unitary languages and doctrines, while the centrifugal force opens up for diversity and alien voices. The intense struggles between these two forces make up the *heteroglossic* nature of the language of life (Bakhtin, 1982).

The utterance

As displayed in Bager (2013 – paper 1), Bakhtin begins any examination of concrete situated encounters with the understanding that ‘an utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations’ (Bakhtin, 1952, p. 94). The utterance emerges from dialogue as a continuation of it, as a rejoinder

within it; it does not enter into it from the *sidelines*. Bakhtin argues that “this does not exhaust the internal dialogism of the word. It encounters an alien word not only in the object itself: every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (Bakhtin, 1952, p. 272). Based on this explanation, interaction is always dependent on the *addressivity* and *answerability* of the word/utterance/discourse as it is always directed from someone to someone. This latter someone can be an addressee in the here-and-now situational setting of interaction, or it can be an outsider in the wider social sphere. Thereby communication and interaction depend on the concrete situation and the addresser’s imagination and sense of the addressee. At all levels of interaction, meaning-making is a two-sided act and a complex process as any word is viewed as the “reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee. Each and every word expresses the ‘one’ in relation to the ‘other’” (Bakhtin, 1952). Meaning-making is fundamentally interactive, dialogical and dependent on the addressivity and answerability of the utterances and the situational circumstance of every concrete situation (cf. *once occurring being of event*; Bakhtin, 1993). Consciousness, meaning, discourse and subjectivity are part of the dialogue, and they arise within dialogue. As elaborated in Bager (2013 – paper 1), this way of framing dialogue and meaning-making opposes, for instance, a liberal humanistic approach: subjects are not carried into situations as pre-given and pre-social entities by already fixed speakers and subjects from the outside. Meaning and subjectivity are co-produced by the full social interaction of all participants and voices from within and without the creative event (Bager, 2013 – paper 1, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Linell, 2009). Chapter four expands on this concept and reveals that this perception of meaning-making comes close to the ethnomethodological purview as described by scholars such as Goodwin (2000), Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) and Raudaskoski (1999). For instance, in my close-up analysis, I draw on Bamberg’s positioning theory belonging to the field of discursive psychology that also links up to ethnomethodology and builds on similar ideas (especially sequential interpretation).

Otherness

“To be means to communicate... To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another”. (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287)

We co-create our understanding and knowing of self, others and interactional practices on the border-zone of the others’ alien and strange perspectives and voices as we continuously accommodate surpluses of seeing (Bager, 2013 – paper 1; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986; Linell, 2009). As a result, we cannot create a sense of self, others and organizational phenomenon without the voice of the others, as identity creation and the ongoing formation of (organizational) cultures is a fundamentally co-creative accomplishment. So, *otherness* plays an important role in the ongoing

(re)construction of everyday practices and so does *accommodation of otherness* as we partake in dialogue and identity (re)shaping practices. Dialogue can be said to be an encounter with otherness – it is about negotiating difference and accommodating otherness and surpluses of seeing.

Bakhtin's notion of voice is wide as it covers discourses, ideologies, perspectives and themes as well as media for speech and the uttered speech of embodied persons (Bager, 2013 – paper 1, 2014 – paper 2; Bakhtin, 1982). It straddles concrete situated discourses to abstract ideologies. The close-up discourse analysis conducted in papers 3 through 5 (Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Bager et al, in review – paper 3) zooms in on the participants' other-orientation efforts, showing how complex trajectories of otherness and temporal multiplicity emerge in dialogue in the leadership forum. I will go into depth with this discussion in Chapter four.

The unfinalized dialogue, discourse and being

To Bakhtin, “Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 166). Dialogue and meaning-making are never-ending and unfinalized. He represents trust in our innate capacities of being creative creatures even though we orient toward authoritative discourses that have become more solidified than others through social evolutionary monologizing processes (e.g. professional languages, language of cultures, academic discourses, political discourses, etc.). Bakhtin holds that subjects are inherently creative as we continuously add new flavour to dialogue (Bager, 2013 – paper 1, 2014 – paper 2; Bakhtin, 1982; Linell, 2009). Identity-wise, Bakhtin sees each subject as “populated” by multiple others. Thus, the subject is in a sense fragmented both internally and externally, but nevertheless is a unique, irreplaceable being. Due to “unfinishedness” and “situatedness”, there is no identity as a product, but rather an ongoing self-identification process which starts at birth and ends in death, the only moments each subject is completely alone. From Bakhtinian thinking, I understand being as in a constant transformation. Each transformation helps us to be more what we may at every moment be, as there is no human essence. There is only what can be termed as a jointing of being that each subject identifies as “I”, although not completely consciously. This jointing is only identified by each subject because of the mirror reflections others offer her.

Internally persuasive and authoritative discourses

In my reading of Bakhtin's works, I find no clear demarcation of the term “discourse”. His use of a wide range of concepts such as *voice*, *outsidedness*, *other*, *consciousness*, *word*, *utterance*, *language* and *discourse* are tangled up and very closely interconnected; therefore, they seem hard to separate clearly (Bager, 2013 – paper 1; Morris, 1994). Discourses can be seen as strings and chains of utterances

and voices that are always multiply present in every situation, brought into play by interlocutors. Discourse is thus inescapably dialogic and historically contingent (positioned within, and inseparable from, a community, a history and a place). He speaks of an *internally persuasive word and discourse*:

“as opposed to one that is externally authoritative - is, as it is affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with ‘one’s own word’. In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else’s. Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words [...]. It enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. More than that, it enters into an intense interaction, a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses”. (Bakhtin, 1982, pp. 145-346).

Bakhtin’s authoritative discourses are crystallized through time. Bakhtin’s authoritative discourses are crystallized through time and become more persuasive and solidified than others to which we orient in interaction (e.g., language of professional groups) (Bakhtin, 1982). These authoritative discourses represent crystallization of knowledge forms that are (re)constituted through ongoing never-finalized, intense and subtle interactional struggles. They are the effects of monologizing and centripetal forces throughout social evolutionary processes in which some *authoritative words/discourses* and *internally persuasive discourses* (e.g. religious, political and moral discourses) are created as more persuasive and solidified than opposing discourses.

I will now turn to how I perceive discourse in continuation of Bakhtinian thoughts. I draw in aspects from ODS and Foucauldian thinking in my construction of a multi-scaled understanding and analytical frame to capture diverse aspects of organizational discourse.

Discourse as action and as embodied place bound co-accomplishment

Bakhtin operates with the concept of discourse according to diverse “dimensions” of meaning-making, which resembles Gee’s (2014) distinction between discourse with a lowercase *d* and Discourse with a capital *D* which is comparable to Iedema’s (2003) differentiation between discourse¹ and discourse². Iedema also links up to Bakhtinian dialogicality and discourse¹ addresses “the socialization of experience” and “the cacophony of thoughts, words, meanings, communications, cultures, and so on” (Iedema 2003, p. 20) while discourse² represents “socialized experience” and “background knowing against the backdrop of which that cacophony can be reduced to sense and non-sense” (Iedema 2003, p. 20). Like Iedema, I understand and use the term discourse to refer to construction constituted of the interplay of discourse¹ and discourse². Iedema (2007) further defines discourse as action encompassing the interplay between diverse semiotics, materials and the contingent

character of social-organizational processes. He points to how a range of discourse scholars differentiate between discourse, action and text. My way of framing discourse follows suit with Iedema's alternative view on discourse, stressing that: 1) discourse is not merely language but also includes image, design, technology and other modes of meaning-making; 2) discourse co-emerges with materiality; and 3) discourse manifests a specific, historically situated form of life (Iedema, 2007). I see discourse as action and as a place-bound emergent embodied co-accomplishment that draws in broader and more or less solidified and opposing discourses from the past, (re)configured in the present and in anticipation of future discursive events. The (re)constitutive process of discourse is messy, tensional and paradoxical. Discourses are made up by subjects' activating utterances and voices in particular contexts. These utterances and voices form certain discourses and thereby prevent other possible discourses from emerging. It is according to this understanding of discourse that I construct my multifaceted methodological frame.

Traditional Bakhtinian dialogue studies fall short when it comes to providing tools for analysing and understanding the broader dimensions of discourse² (Bager, accepted – paper 4; Bager, submitted – paper 5; Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Linell, 2009; Phillips, 2011). Nevertheless, a Bakhtinian purview demands that such constituents are taken into account as all utterances and communicative efforts are seen as influenced by discourses from outside of the creative events (Bager, 2013 – paper 1; Linell, 2009). Therefore I turn to Foucauldian thoughts and analytical strategic aspects, which I have found suitable when describing the complex networks of crystallized knowledge forms and authoritative discourses that aspire to push us in certain ideologically-saturated directions in our everyday (organizational) doings. As elaborated in Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), the traditional Foucauldian analysis of *dispositifs* is oriented at mapping historical lines and formations of discourses, often through textual materials (cf. discourse²), whereas a Bakhtinian approach orients to what is accomplished in concrete situations (cf. discourse¹). The former analytical strategy addresses and maps the relations of forces and attempts at disposing the subject, and the latter examines the in situ discursive practices in which subjects and discourses are (re)configured. As we will see in the following, I find affinities between the Bakhtinian concept of authoritative discourses and the Foucauldian term *dispositif*.

Foucauldian governmentality

I represent what can be termed a progressive reading of Foucault's work, which is in opposition to an international periodic and more common reading (Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Raffnsøe et al, 2011). In other words, I perceive that his work was ongoing; he continuously refined his arguments, and his concepts were closely entangled. Likewise, as elaborated in Bager and Mølholm (submitted), I perceive the constitution of formations of discourse, the *dispositif*, *governmentality* and the mechanisms and procedures of

power as intertwined, interconnected and interrelated and as different aspects of the collected ensemble of relations of forces that penetrates a societal network.

In Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), we paint governmentality as a political way of looking at the knowledge, techniques and methods used by members of society to try to deal with, manage and control particular situations. From this governmentality perspective, corporate subjects live and act within particular regimes of power that influence their understanding of themselves, the organizations in which they are embedded, and the full purpose of their function. This includes guidelines for how to lead, manage and do things in everyday work life. As a result, I understand governmentality as an unexhausted framework of power that can be used to capture, describe and understand the multiple ways in which power operates and transforms. It provides an analytical tool that allows me to study force relations that incite organizational members to perform certain embodied discursive actions in certain contexts and thereby render other actions not likely since situated interactions are always affected by complex relations of forces that affect the production of subjectivities (Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Bager & Mølholm, submitted).

Dispositif and lines of subjectification as a line of escape: an orientation toward the new

I view governmentality as embedded in the complex network of *dispositifs* that seek to influence conduct in concrete situations (cf. conduct of conduct). A *dispositif* is “a set of strategies of the relations of forces supporting, and supported by, certain types of knowledge” (Foucault, 1980, p. 196), which implies a process of subjectification. Deleuze (1992) makes an interesting nuancement of Foucault’s *dispositif* concept as he refines it as an *ensemble* consisting of four types of lines: *lines of visibility*, *lines of enunciation*, *lines of force* and *lines of subjectification*. These lines are non-constants “but follow directions, trace balances which are always off balance, now drawing together and then distancing themselves from one another” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 159). *Lines of subjectification* is a concept particularly interesting in relation to my research as it delineates the concrete situated transformation of subject positions as accomplished in situ (Bager, accepted – paper 4; Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted). Deleuze describes the *lines of subjectification* as possible *lines of escape* (Deleuze, 1992). It is “a process, a production of subjectivity in a social apparatus [*dispositif*]: it has to be made, inasmuch as the apparatus allows it to come into being or makes it possible. It is a line of escape. It escapes preceding lines and escapes *from* itself” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 161). Deleuze’s description can be said to picture an “open” and non-deterministic reading of Foucault’s thoughts that shifts the traditional retrospective and distanced analytical gazing toward the becoming of something new. It indicates the subject as an active participant with capabilities to transform the knowledge forms, procedures and action directing force relations that follow

suit with the Foucauldian formations of *dispositifs*: subjectification processes have to be continuously made and constitute a potential *line of escape* from dominant governmental forces (Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted). This understanding of the transformational character of *lines of subjectification* and in the longer run *dispositifs* comes close to the Bakhtinian trust in our innate capacities to saturate open-ended dialogue and discourse with new unique and creative flavours. I also detect a normative stance in Bakhtin's writings as he endorses dialogism and warns about the dangers of monologizing regimes and authoritative discourses (*dispositifs*) (Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982). This discussion will be elaborated in Chapter five, in which I argue for an ethics of dialogue.

As discussed in Bager and Mølholm (submitted), it is worth noticing that Foucault himself did not seem to represent a deterministic understanding of the subject's transformational abilities and agency, even though he did not pay much attention to the translation of discourse into everyday actions (cf. regimes of appropriation) (Bager et al, in review; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Deleuze, 1992). To the contrary, he dedicated his work to describing the historical conditions regulating the constitution of the formations of discourses and the dynamics of power. He constructed a history of the ways that human beings were made subjects. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that power as strategies of relations of forces acts upon the actions of the subjects, and subjects make the constraints of power play spontaneously upon themselves (Foucault, 1995): "it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions" (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). As such, power is subtly embedded in the network of relations of forces, it "lives" in everything and it thereby influences the concrete processes of subjectification in everyday work life.

Foucault never studied the actualization of subjectification processes and thereby left this to his followers. Nevertheless, practices are core aspects of Foucauldian analysis without which governmentality would be an abstract theory of power that opposes Foucault's own recommendations of a power analytics (Bager et al, in review – paper 3). However, a Foucauldian analysis of practices does not include the situated encounters and *lines of subjectification* in everyday organizational life which is the centre of attention in dialogicality studies. Within these studies, focus is precisely on the subjects' actualization of dialogue (cf. *once occurrence being of event*; Bakhtin, 1993).

Resemblances between Foucauldian and Bakhtinian approaches

Foucault and Bakhtin focused on diverse aspects and dimensions of meaning-making, and they arrived to their main perspectives from diverse points of

departures. Nevertheless, I find that their lines of thought have interesting affinities. As elaborated in Bager et al (in review – paper 3) and in Bager (accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), the notion of authoritative discourses is argued to resemble the concept of *dispositif*. Both concepts picture the crystallization of knowledge forms as (re)constituted through ongoing never-finalized, intense and subtle interactional struggles that incite what should take place in concrete interaction. According to Bakhtin, authoritative discourses are also (re)constituted in a complex play of prescriptive and resistive force relations (i.e. centrifugal and centripetal forces) embedded in every situation. Subjects tend to draw on these authoritative discourses and add to them new flavour in creative events. As we shall see in the close-up discourse analyses, it is in the messy heteroglossic nature of meaning-making that *lines of subjectification* and subject positions are worked up (Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted). I am aware that Bakhtin and Foucault arrived at the two concepts from studying meaning-making starting from different perceptual distances and with two diverse analytical attentions. I find that Bakhtin developed his term “authoritative discourse” according to the study of cultures and traditions by analysing the “smaller” lines starting from the once occurring being of event (Bakhtin, 1982). In contrast, Foucault arrived at the term *dispositif* by looking at rationalities and studying how governmental forces historically incite to govern and control subjects. The Foucauldian gaze focuses on the “bigger” lines, so to speak. Thereof I believe they comprise a productive marriage in the analysis of diverse dimensions of meaning-making and organizational practices. By supplementing notions from governmentality and the concept *dispositif* to the Bakhtinian thinking, I construct a potent analytical framework that straddles a diversity of organizational complexities, together with both the broad “bigger” lines (cf. discourse⁵) and the close dimension and “smaller” lines of discourse (cf. discourse¹). I will return to the applicability and practicability of this combination in Chapters five and six where I gather findings from the process analysis and my close-up discourse analyses along with the resulting zooming-out connections.

Dialogue as *dispositif* and authoritative discourse

Within organizational life, dialogue can be regarded as having become a *dispositif* and an *authoritative discourse* (Bager et al, in review – paper 3). Various scholars point to how dialogue has become a dominant discourse within a wide range of contemporary societal decision-making practices, the consequences of which are taken for granted as positive with emancipating benefits (Bager, 2013 – paper 1, Bager 2014 – paper 2; Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Karlsen & Villadsen, 2008; Linell, 2009; Märtsin et al, 2011; Phillips, 2011; Phillips et al, 2012). Scholars within dialogue and participatory studies further note, based on analyses of dialogic development encounters, how dialogic setups (scenes) do not always prompt the intended ideals and sometimes further the direct opposites (Linell, 2009; Olesen & Nordentoft, 2013; Phillips, 2011). Thereto they point to how dialogic change agents and researchers often do not provide an in-depth theorization of the concept

dialogue and its implications for practice. In the present research, I follow their questioning of the natural assumptions of dialogue as a positive phenomenon and provide a thorough theorization and in-depth analysis of its implications in the dialogic practices in the leadership forum. As we shall see in Chapter four, my close-up analyses support their conclusions that there is divergence between dialogic ideals and some of the actualized dialogic practices in the leadership forum.

Dialogicality: different from mainstream understandings of dialogue

The Bakhtinian way of framing dialogue is different from the mainstream and more persuasive authoritative ways of perceiving dialogue in organizational studies, such as liberal humanistic and critical hermeneutic approaches (Bager, 2013 – paper 1; Deetz & Simpson, 2004). With Bakhtin, it relates to a postmodern and poststructuralist research field in which meaning-making is seen as ambiguous, plurivocal, tensional and unfinalized.

Liberal humanistic approach

As elaborated in Bager (2013), liberal humanistic approaches to dialogue stemming from the works of e.g. Maslow, Rogers and Buber are hegemonic and mainstream in today's society as they are "found in basic communication textbooks, personal improvement books, and corporate, religious, and community programs" (Deetz & Simpson, 2004). In Bager (2013), I posit the consequences of this prevalence as 1) a tendency to lock on to the goal of achieving a common ground (Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Phillips, 2011), 2) stigmatization of the individual by stressing its responsibility in relation to societal and organizational challenges and 3) omitting to focus on the complex and power-laden sociopolitical organizational circumstances in and out of which they originally emerged (Bager, 2013). According to Deetz (2001), such consensus-oriented approaches to organizational communication tend to view challenges and differences in opinions as errors that need to be fixed in order to reinstate imagined states of organizational consensus. Viewed through the pluralist lens of Bakhtinian dialogicality, such approaches dismiss, more or less deliberately, the heteroglossic and complex nature of human interaction and (organizational) practices (Bager, 2013; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986). These mainstream pursuits of the perfection of organizational practices tend to overlook the messiness and complexity intrinsic to sociopolitical organizational reality. Consciousnesses and identity emerge from dialogue and interaction as a continuation of it and a rejoinder within it – they do not enter into it from the sideline as already fixed pre-interactional entities, as perceived in the liberal humanistic approaches (Bager, 2013).

Critical hermeneutic approach

A Habermasian framing of dialogue represents an example of the critical hermeneutic perspective (Bager, 2013 – paper 1; Deetz & Simpson, 2004). As elaborated in Bager (2014 – paper 2), such a framing of dialogue adds an interesting decision element to the liberal humanistic framing. However, this approach is widely criticised for its overreliance on rational subjects capable of making rational decisions in specially designed dialogic spaces (cf. the ideal speech situation; Habermas, 1970), revealing a request for consensus. As we will see in Chapter five, I criticise a democratic research team's acquirement of ideals from dialogic AR that follows suit with the Habermasian way of understanding and staging dialogue. In a later process and close-up discourse analysis, I show how these ideals shine through in the situated dialogic encounters in the leadership forum and restrain the possibility for enacting plurivocal and dissensus-based dialogic encounters in terms of dialogic studies (Deetz, 2001). For instance they show through as locking the realization of the dialogic events into pre-scripted interaction and participation order, eclipsing the possible emergence of alternative orders and ways of enacting participatory research processes. The quest for consensus in Habermasian thinking, reflected in tools for actions within the dialogic tradition of AR, turns out not to suit the research team's intended ideals of doing and experimenting with new procedures for plurivocal participatory dissensus-based research (see Chapter five).

Dialogicality: a change in organizational attitude

A range of organizational scholars that build on Bakhtinian thoughts note that taking on this perspective requires a change in organizational attitude. For instance, Shotter (1998) notes how the Bakhtinian line of thoughts (among others scholars', e.g. Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) represents a break with a Cartesian conception, centred in mental states and acts hidden inside the heads of individuals. He points to how the monologic Cartesian framing has traditionally dominated thoughts in the West and how he sees that we are slowly changing this perception. Shotter (1998) states, "The changes in our conceptions of ourselves and of our relations to our surroundings that it will bring, are, I think, very deep and quite astonishing - so much so, that we shall find many of the conclusions reached in the chapter quite hard to accept". At that historical time (15 years ago), the Bakhtinian thinking seemed to be a strange and thought-provoking perspective to acquire in the understanding of organizational meaning-making that would bring about a fundamental and hard change in attitude. In his later works (e.g. Shotter, 2011), he resembles the Bakhtinian perspective with Barad's relatively new take on a agentive realist account of sociomateriality, and her account of intra-action as opposed to interaction (Barad, 2007). Shotter (2011) points to how such perspectives require a move beyond an analytical toward an ecological approach that is sensitive to the *particular*, the *local* and the *timely*. This new mode of inquiry shifts the traditional focus from what goes on inside people to how people

go on inside of specific surroundings and local circumstances (Shotter, 2011).

As noted in Bager (2014 – paper 2), scholars who embrace the pluralistic Bakhtinian perspective on communication have been steadily increasing in particular over the past 10 years and now play an important role for scholars who engage in a social constructionist take on organizations. For instance, these Bakhtinian concepts are represented by scholars who emphasize plural meaning-making, emergence and multivocality in organizations, focusing on aspects such as narratives, discourses and storytelling (e.g. Barge & Little, 2002; Cunliffe, Luhman, & Boje, 2004; Iedema, 2003a; Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008; Jørgensen & Boje, 2010; Shotter, 2011; Taylor & Van Every, 1999).

Dialogue: a way of being in the world

Building on work by other scholars, I (Bager, 2014 – paper 2) list a range of examples of crucial changes in organizational attitude caused by the Bakhtinian framing. For instance, Barge and Little (2002, p. 376) paint dialogicality as a way of being with people rather than an *abnormal* communication type that is disconnected from everyday organizational practices. They note how dialogue traditionally was perceived as a unique communicational activity and as a certain skill/tool that can be acquired and activated when change is desired (e.g. a Bohmian framing of dialogue). They further note how it has commonly been used to cultivate second-order learning (e.g. Senge) and seen as a particular conversational episode referred to as a noun (“to have a dialogue”) rather than an adverb (“to behave dialogically”) or an adjective (“dialogic discourse”). So, based on this understanding dialogue is not to be seen as a distinctive communication mode acquired for problem-solving in specially designed dialogic spaces following pre-set principles (e.g. perspectives building on Bohmian and Habermasian perspectives).

From monologic participation to dialogic participation

In Bager (2014 – paper 2), I further point to how dialogicality triggers an important shift in one’s understanding of participants in organizational change communication processes. For instance, Jabri, Allyson, and Boje (2008) note how dialogic practices have commonly been used to cultivate *monologic participation* in the perfection of organizational practices. They stress that change agents use dialogue to involve participants in agreeing with the main objectives rather than in knowledge co-creation; in particular, “the stress is placed on achieving consensus, or in utilizing rhetorics of persuasion (changing intervention and/conversational styles) to arrive at common ground for all (to keep contentious points of view on the margin)” (Jabri et al, 2008, p. 668). The mainstream framing of dialogue is static rather than dynamic, in which dialogue is treated as an instrument for achieving pre-set goals, and participants are enacted as objects of the processes. Instead, they encourage to develop *dialogic wisdom* by, for instance, furthering,

what they term *dialogic participation*, meaning that participants are treated as subjects in processes that get an actual say in the co-production of knowledge and in defining change processes.

In the following, I display a multi-layered model assisted by a table that sums up the previously elaborated methodological backdrop through which I densify how I perceive organizational interaction in relation to diverse dimensions of organizational meaning-making practices.

(Re)constituent layers of organizational meaning-making

The following model, together with a table explaining the central concepts of my research (see Table 1 below), was produced for Bager (submitted – paper 5). In these, I gather and reflect upon the aforementioned theoretical and philosophical thoughts which are continuously nuanced throughout the five research papers. They sum up my ongoing accommodation of otherness and surpluses of seeing through my five years of PhD study. The model represents the multiple dimensions and (re)constituent layers of organizational meaning-making, starting from the inside with *the self* surrounded by multiple and entangled layers ending up in the outer layer: *the society* and *formations of discourses*.

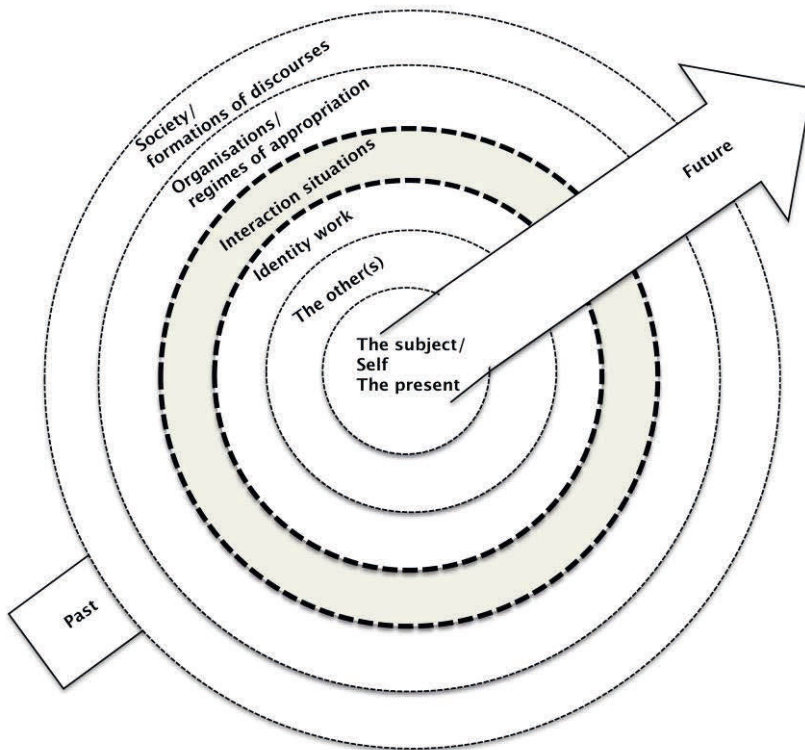


Figure 1: (Re)constituent layers of organizational meaning-making (in Bager, submitted – paper 5).

The model is an analytical construct that represents my humble attempt to visualize the subtle and profound complexities that shroud the everyday embodied (re)configuration of meaning, self and the social world. Drawing inspiration from Blommaert's (2005) concept of *layered simultaneity*, this multi-layered understanding of embodied meaning-making, self and identity is dependent on, for instance, *temporal multiplicity* and various entangled dimensions of (organizational) contextual circumstances. It stresses the dialectical relationship between the subject/self, the situational interaction and layers in the embodied social world. It embraces Bakhtin's inherent thought: any utterance, dialogue or discourse is to be understood in terms of its situational *here and now*, in its *small time* which every now and then breaks through its own time and becomes a part of the *great time* as it lives throughout centuries (Bakhtin, 1993)². The layers are dialectically interdependent, and it is impossible to untangle each layer and describe it detached from the rest. The figure serves as a tool to visualize and

² This comes close to Lemke's (2001) idea of *multiple timescales*.

explain how I analytically *zoom in and out* between the layers, switching theoretical lenses and trailing connections (Nicolini, 2009a), starting from the interaction situation, which is highlighted in the model. In agreement with Bakhtinian ideals for dialogue analysis (Bager, 2013; Bakhtin, 1982; Linell, 2009) and Nicolini's methodological metaphorical movement, when *zooming in and zooming out* one must start with the organizational situated encounters and then, according to what becomes relevant in situ, foreground particular aspects of practice and bracket others (Bager, submitted – paper 5).

In the table in Figure 2, I dense the epistemological and ontological assumptions according to each layer and argue for their interconnectedness.

Focus:	Theoretical and philosophical assumptions:	References:
Subject/self	Fleeting, ongoing, fragmented, never finalized, in flux, iterative, emergent. Holds official and unofficial consciousness: The individual (and entangled) consciousness is constantly (re)created in inner and outer dialogue and battles between often contradictory official, unofficial and alien voices. Carries a multiplicity and often contradictory set of voices and discourses dependent on its historical trajectory through life. Entangled and dependent on the other(s) in dialogue/meaning-making Individuals have become who they are in and through interaction. The subject is objectivized through categorization and dividing practices (e.g. mad/sane, sick/healthy).	Bager, 2013, 2014; accepted, submitted; Bager et al, in review; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986, 1993; Bamberg, 1997, 2006 Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008Linell, 1998; Foucault, 1982.
The other(s)	Embodied otherness is a central element when we create a sense of self, others and the world. The other(s) can be of human and nonhuman character. The others invoked in interaction can be third parties that are co-present or distant: The word is never spoken for the first time, as we draw on voices and third parties from outside of the creative events. We accommodate surpluses of seeing in dialogue with the others strange/alien perspectives.	Bager, 2013, 2014; accepted, submitted; Bager et al, in review; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986, 1993; Linell, 2009, 1998.
Identity work	Arises and is co-accomplished in and through the messy interactional flow in situated events dependent on and constitutive of all layers of interaction. Is (re)constituted in and through interaction. Is worked up in non-linear and non-coherent interactive processes. Power as strategies of relations of forces acts upon the actions of the subjects, and subjects make the constraints of power play spontaneously upon themselves.	Bager, 2013, 2013, 2014; accepted, submitted; Bager et al, in review; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986, 1993; Bamberg, 1997, 2006 Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Foucault 1995, 1980, 1982; Mølholm, 2014.
The interaction situation	The interaction situation is co-accomplished by all participants and their entangled embodied historical experience in interplay with the embodied setup. We co-create discourses in situ that run counter to or are complicit with broader discourses. Is influenced by the governing of the subject that renders specific actions likely (cf. conduct of conduct). Some authoritative discourses and dispositifs become more persuasive than others.	Bager, 2013, 2014; accepted, submitted; Bager et al, in review; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986, 1993; Bamberg, 1997, 2006 Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Linell, 2009, 1998; Foucault, 1982.
Organizations/Regimes of Appropriation	Organisations are viewed as (re)constituted by dispositifs and authoritative discourses that aim to prescribe what is ought to be done in situated organizational practices. Dispositifs and authoritative discourses are worked up by a diversity of crystallized knowledge forms that we tend to take for granted. Dispositifs are constituted by lines of visibility, lines of enunciations, lines of force and lines of subjectification. Every line of subjectification is a possible line of escape. Organizations are multifaceted sites for ongoing struggles between a diverse set of voices (cp. heteroglossia). Tensions and struggles are inevitable and productive features (cf. dissensus).	Bager, 2013, 2014; accepted, submitted; Bager et al, in review; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Deetz, 1995; Deleuze, 1988, 1992; Foucault 1980, 2001; Iedema, 2007, 2003; Jørgensen, 2007; Mølholm 2013, 2014.
Society/Formations of Discourses	Rules regulating the formation of objects, concepts, modalities and strategies, limiting what can be said by whom, how and when. Is composed of all layers and (re)constituted by embodied social evolutionary processes. The social world is created and recreated through mutual, continuous and dialectic processes of dialogical interaction and is fundamentally dialogic.	Bager, 2013, 2014; accepted, submitted; Bager et al, in review; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986, 1993; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Foucault 1969; Mølholm, 2013, 2014.
Temporal multiplicity	The arrow in figure 1 illustrates that all constitutive layers of interaction are transcended by temporal multiplicity, as every situation invokes features/voices from the past, invoked in the co-present shared meaning making and in anticipation of future events (cf. addressivity)	Bager, 2013, accepted, submitted; Bager and Mølholm, submitted; Bakhtin, 1982, 1986, 1993; Cunliffe et al., 2004.

Figure 2: Table of philosophical and theoretical assumptions according to (re)constituent layers of interaction (in Bager, submitted – paper 5).

Figure 2 includes aspects from discursive psychology and more precisely from positioning theory and small story analysis that I will elaborate in Chapter four as I present my frame for close-up discourse analysis.

Demarcation of the multifaceted framework

The aforementioned metaphor of a two-sided lens implicates limited visibility as the application of certain tools-for-practice (theories) allow certain outlooks that exclude and place others in the background. I acknowledge that my framework represents one out of multiple ways to frame organizational meaning-making, which is closely tied to my particular research interests and embeddedness in contemporary societal and research circumstances. This frame allows me to focus on the ambiguities and tensions immanent in dialogue and the circumstantial complexities that become relevant, and it inevitably brackets other perspectives and ways of understanding these. Thereto I combine perspectives that certain scholars might perceive as incompatible due to what can be framed as conservatism within certain research traditions. This eclectic methodological approaching to the understanding of meaning-making practices comes close to scholars such as Nicoloni (2009b) in his forming of a *toolkit logic* and Scollon and Scollon (2004) in their *nexus analysis*. As such, this methodological approach suits my view on discourse as action and as emerging in and out of situated interactions in interplay between discourse¹ and discourse² (Bager, 2013; Bakhtin, 1982; Iedema, 2007; Linell, 2009).

Zooming in and out in the thesis

The present chapter represents a zooming-out movement clarifying my methodological backdrop. In the next two chapters, I zoom in on diverse analytical levels adopting two different perceptive distances. In Chapter three, I focus attention on a process analysis that gives insights into decision-making and a resemiotization process in the research-based leadership forum, based on a diversity of data types produced in action. In Chapter four, I zoom in even closer as I conduct a close-up discourse analysis of diverse interactional setups in the leadership forum showing some of the embodied consequences of such. In the following chapters, I zoom out and trail connections to broader discursive elements discussing the analytical findings through the lenses of dialogicality and governmentality.

Thereby I perform a *sequential selective re-positioning* (Nicolini, 2009a) as I represent practice, arriving from analytical considerations found in the concrete interaction, and from there trailing connections, emphasizing certain aspects and bracketing others.

The position and gaze of the dialogic researcher: in the schism between an insider and outsider

My researcher position is multi-perspectival as I take both an insider and outsider perspective. I am, on the one hand, involved as an insider and participant in the co-creation of knowledge on the phenomenon under study as one of the initiators and

co-designers of the leadership forum. In several incidences, I take active part in the facilitation of the forum; I perform positions such as *mediator*, *interviewer*, *facilitator*, *lecturer* and *researcher*. I am also actively involved in the backstage researcher decision-making processes that direct the form and content of the leadership forum. On the other hand, I take an outsider and privileged researcher position as I capture what goes on, thereby *resemiotizing* (Iedema, 2003) the in situ actions into diverse empirical data types with the aim to retrospectively re-present and analyse practice.

In a Bakhtinian sense, the dialogic researcher is naturally acknowledged as one of the constituents and is not reduced and confused with being a neutral “onlooker” as “the person who understands (including the researcher himself) becomes a participant in the dialogue, although on a special level (depending on the area of understanding or research) [...] The observer has no position outside the observed world, and his observation enters as a constituent part into the observed object” (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 125-126). Based on this understanding, the researcher is inevitably positioned within dialogue and cannot take an objective look at a phenomenon without influencing it. The researcher’s process of gaining knowledge of and evaluating/analyzing a phenomenon becomes itself a constituent factor in the development of such knowledge. This entanglement provides an argument for conducting collaborative research in participatory processes in which the researcher’s embodied knowledge lends voice to one discourse among several. When a person cannot position herself as an outsider and observe interaction impartially, it seems odd to spend time accounting for the researcher’s subjective influence as errors or biases (as seen in more conventional research traditions). The researcher may as well reflect in the same manner upon her presence and entanglement and handle this in a manner that is as ethical and constructive as possible. As I account for in Chapter three, the field of AR offers tools for handling and reflecting the researcher’s subjectivity in participatory co-constructive development processes.

Inspiration from the auto-ethnographic tradition

As elaborated in Bager (accepted – paper 4), I draw inspiration from the auto-ethnographic tradition because it provides tools to re-present practice and its context-dependent specificities including the researcher’s subjective experiences and perception of a culture³. In the analyses in Chapters three and four (Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), I include my own experiences and backstage reflections, which gives me a unique possibility to take into account my experiences from the process along with my backstage activities and reflections combined with insights into the decision-making processes in the democratic

³ This is also a crucial point in nexus analysis, in which it is a requirement that the researcher gets to know the phenomenon (i.e. the participants’ experiences of the situation) she is interested in (cf. the zone of identification; Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

research team. This move adds an important element to my studies that cannot be captured by merely examining the data or observing from a distance (Baarts, 2010). As seen in Chapter three and four, I can inform the analytical findings with an auto-ethnographic gazing and provide insights into the processual and context-dependent constituents. Such in-depth ethnographically-inspired analyses of contemporary organizational development practices are rarely conducted. They provide insights into the everydayness and procedures in a dialogic development leadership forum as part of a contemporary fluid and network-based organization. Adopting this approach allows me to straddle insider (cf. emic) and outsider (cf. etic) perspectives involving both a 1st order and 2nd order perspective in the analysis (Bager, accepted – paper 4; Pike, 1954).

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS: A RESEMIOTIZATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The scope in the present chapter is twofold. Firstly I answer the part of my research question related to how to *stage* and *manage* plurivocal dialogue. This is achieved through an elaboration of the case – the leadership forum – that was initiated by a democratic and interdisciplinary research team at the University of Aalborg (AAU) in which I was involved. An aspiration was to involve professional leaders and communication students in a collaborative research process with researchers to co-create plurivocal knowledge in/on leadership communication and to experiment with new procedures for doing plurivocal collaborative research processes based on dissensus. One of the plurivocal aims of the forum was that each researcher and student was to be able to re-contextualize the data produced in the forum according to her own research interests. Secondly I start to answer the part of my research question on *how to analyse and critique* the plurivocal and dissensus-based dialogic encounters in the leadership forum. To do so, I analyse the research process against dialogicality and governmentality, thus providing my re-contextualization of the data produced as matching my particular research aims. The analysis and critique are continued in Chapter four when I zoom even closer in on the dialogic encounters in a close-up embodied discourse analysis.

I have gathered a diversity of data and re-presentations from the leadership forum as part of my *data archive* (Rapley, 2008), and I draw on these data types as they become relevant in the following process analysis. I exemplify how different semiotics are translated into the other as the social process unfolds, and I can ask why these semiotics, rather than others, are mobilized to do certain things at certain times. Inspired by Iedema (2003), this approach displays an interesting process of *resemiotization* that clarifies which ideals and discursive positions are expressed (emerge) in the becoming of the leadership forum (e.g. in the leader recruiting process, the funding process and the opening of the forum as well as how these are actualized and resemiotized in the further research process). Therefore, this chapter's analysis provides insights into the decision-making practices and processual aspects of the research process.

Due to space and scope concerns, the five research papers that serve as the basis of my dissertation do not contain as thorough an elaboration and process analysis of the forum as in the present chapter. Firstly I run through some of the pivotal events in the process leading up to the leadership forum. This description involves some historical aspects 1) from my candidate program at the study of communication at AAU and insights I derived from my former employment as a team leader working with the development of leadership communicative competencies and 2) from metalogue with other researchers on organizational and leadership trends. Then I

zoom in on activities and data produced in the preparations of the leadership forum providing insights into the research process, positioning and decision-making, such as how inspiration and ideals were drawn from the dialogic tradition of AR and dialogic studies (Deetz, 2001). Subsequently I describe some of the processual specificities of the actualization of the forum. This description reveals how a democratic research team handled a diversity of data types as means for honouring the processual aims invoked from AR: themes and development wishes negotiated with the participants in collaborative research processes direct the design and content in the ongoing research activities (cf. the pragmatic focus of AR; Frimann & Bager, 2012). Finally, I discuss and critique the research practices through my theoretical dialogic fabric.

The historical becoming of the leadership forum:

My studies and experience from being a team leader

During my studies at Humanistic Informatics, I acquired several prolific experiences in combining an organizational discourse analytical purview with aspirations and ideals from AR in the co-production of knowledge in collaborative research processes. For instance in my master thesis, Louise Gordon and I engaged in a collaborative research process with two teams in a Danish Municipality in Northern Jutland. We were “hired” to study an organizational change process and to enhance the anchorage of a newly acquired top down team organizational model which they found problematic to use. We suggested a bottom up and collaborative development process in which the team model could be transformed and progressed into a new form based on their everyday work procedures and needs. In continuation thereof I became a team leader of their team strategy, which involved a six-person interdisciplinary team that continuously battled to service the rest of the department with a wide range of team-supporting functions, such as tools for team development, leadership development, systems audits and legal support, along with assisting the local translation, implementation and anchoring of policies. One of my particular tasks was to consult and assist the head of group and partake in their strategic decision-making processes and help support the actualization and anchorage of their decisions, such as the ongoing assistance of the team-based organization.

Overexposure of the leader position and a tyranny of concepts

In this position I experienced some challenges according to my own leadership practice and in my daily acquaintance with a range of other leaders that laid the basis of the leadership forum. For instance, I coached the other team leaders and established a leader network group in which we could exchange experiences and thematize shared issues and challenges. It turned out that all of us experienced similar challenges and felt pressure in our positions as leaders due to undefined expectations. We also felt we were held overly responsible for a wide range of

things. Our experiences follow suit with what, for instance, Renninson (2011) points to when she writes about how leadership has become overexposed and a solution to self-created problems produced by leadership itself: when something goes wrong in organizational leadership practicing, better or more leadership is called upon. Similarly, she writes about leadership as an empty signifier that has to be filled out with meaning. She studies a historical transformation of leadership discourses drawing on a Foucauldian genealogical analysis strategy and shows how today's leadership consists of handling collisions between a multiplicity of codes, needs and perspectives, which she refines into a polyphony of perspectives, also drawing on dialogicality (Renninson, 2014). Her argument follows suit with what I choose to term a tyranny of concepts (Bager, 2014 – paper 2) in which an overwhelming amount of change agents and bureaus wait in line to offer organizations their new best ways and recipes for doing leadership and organizations, often through top down implementing processes. Indeed, the leadership industry has become a profitable and well-oiled machinery. Examining such trends in leadership development studies/industry, I find that the leader position seems to be overexposed and held responsible for a boundless mass of expectations, which results in a stigmatization of the leader. For instance, many of the leaders that I have met experience loneliness and a huge pressure of undefined demands due to new expectations and ways of organizing in today's organizations. The changes in organizational ways of doings are addressed by Deleuze in terms of his conceptualization of the forming of a *society of control*, which he argues has taken the place of a former *society of discipline* as earlier addressed by Foucault. This type of society produces new and ever-changing lines of subjectification embedding subjects in new meaning-making practices and objectifying patterns of control. As I have noted (accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), these current ways of organizing and attached lines of subjectification are rarely studied up close as to why we know rather little of the consequences of such. It is precisely such consequences that the leadership forum set out to study based on a diverse group of leaders' experiences and accounts of everyday leadership practices. We wanted to oppose the tyranny of concepts and enhance a research-based frame for leaders to meet and dialogue on their current challenges and experiences and see which new knowledge and actions arise.

Leaders' struggles with their own personal communicative skills

A main part of our shared challenges also concerned issues tied to the leaders' personal communication related to diverse aspects of our surroundings. It was a basic concern that the relatively new team and network organization required a different set of communicative and relational skills in which every leader was to communicate and support a complex range of others in their changeable everyday work life. Everyone found this as a main challenge, and we missed tools for action to handle this dimension in accordance with the announced team organization ideals. My job was to arrange workshops that in different ways addressed and supported the development of the leaders' reflexive and practical communicative skills. In my literature search, I did not find much on leaders' personal

communicative skills that were spot on, besides from several approaches stressing how important a phenomenon this is to work with. I considered the sources I did find to be too distanced as they represented a *knowing that* dimension of the topic that was not directly transferable into practical workshops supporting *knowing how* competencies. I drew in different external organizational consultants⁴ to facilitate sub processes. Our overall evaluation was that the consultants were not focused enough on the local specificities and complexities that the leaders dealt with in practice and they therefore did not find the developing sub processes particularly productive for their everyday leadership communicative practices, even though I spent a great deal of time preparing the consultants with knowledge about our certain context-dependent needs. As a consequence, I arranged and facilitated situational workshops, in which the leaders were to talk about and reflect together with one another on situated experiences. Through this bottom up process, we built themes, topics and a range of possible coping strategies. This process revealed that the leaders became more comfortable and prepared to engage with the complex organizational play of others in their everyday work life. It stressed the importance of combining *knowing how* aspects with the *knowing that* dimension of doing organization in relation to training the leaders' communicative abilities; significantly, we could not find answers to these challenges by reading organizational and leadership theories and textbooks.

This gap led me to articulate a PhD proposal on the study of leadership communicative practices starting from leaders' lived experiences. An overall aspiration was to use my experience from the leader network group with the aim to document and qualify this and co-create research-based knowledge stemming from leaders' everyday experiences. My aspiration was to co-create locally grounded research-based knowledge and theory on leadership communicative practices through combining discourse perspectives with norms from participatory research strategies. This application was accepted at the Department of Communication at AAU.

Metalouge on leadership trends

Shortly after my employment at AAU, I established a discussion group together with a fellow lecturer within communication studies and my former boss from a Danish municipality. We met on a regular basis to discuss and reflect upon current theoretical and practical issues of organization and leadership. We all held practical and theoretical knowledge on organizational and leadership studies and taught on these issues within the master's program of Communication Studies. We shared interests in complexity-embracing and dissensus-based theoretical perspectives and had trust in knowledge production through a combination of theory and practice.

⁴ One consultant built on team-building models based on systems theory, another was specialized in developing team-based leader groups in municipal contexts and a third worked with a complexity theoretical basis.

Through these reflective meetings we decided to establish the leadership forum and situate it as an attempt to enact *dialogic studies* (Deetz, 2001) and invite other researchers that were interested in harvesting situated knowledge on leadership communication. I then considered the possibility that the leadership forum could serve as my empirical basis for my PhD thesis⁵.

The leadership forum was part of an overall project that also included experiments with other forms of multivoiced teaching practices at the study of Humanistic Informatics at AAU. For instance, we invited professional leaders into workshops on leadership as a continuation of lectures on AR (Frimann & Bager, 2012).

A crucial goal was to further closer collaboration between a business, an educational program and research through multivoiced collaborative research processes in which a diversity of participants co-create knowledge based on leaders' everyday experiences in combination with theoretical perspectives. In other words, we wanted to set the scene for systematic ongoing plurivocal *accommodation of otherness*.

Leadership strip and funding

Shortly afterward, we coincidentally became aware of the Dean's fund (2011) in the Humanities that offered funding for projects that involved *research*, *business* and *education*, a combination which was fitting according to our research aims and scope. This discovery resulted in a research application for funding (Appendix 1), part of which was an arrangement where all applicants had the possibility to do an embodied presentation of the project. I created the following leadership strip for this particular purpose (my translation):

⁵ Originally I initiated a collaboration with a team of leaders in a Danish municipality, but due to cutbacks and organizational restructuring this collaboration ended very early in the process. Because of insecure organizational states in the municipality, I decided to look elsewhere for collaborators and empirical foundation.

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The becoming of a Research Project

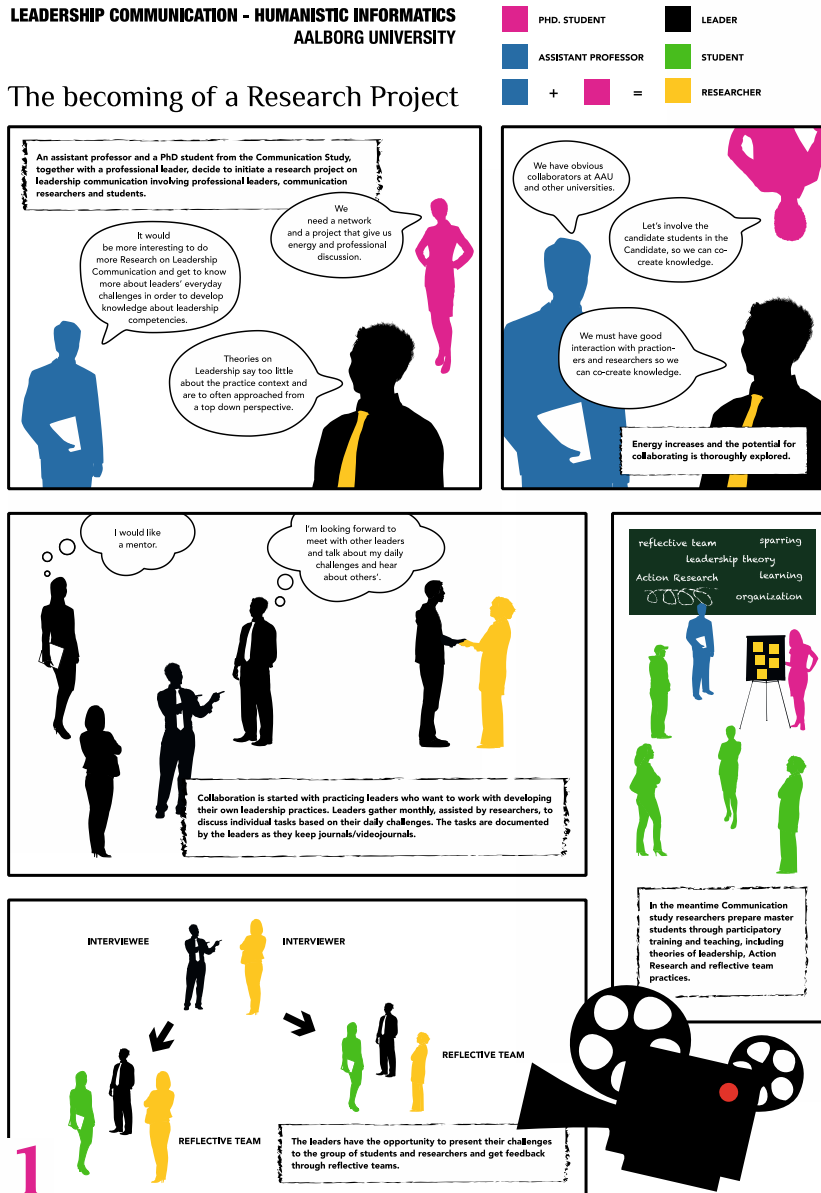
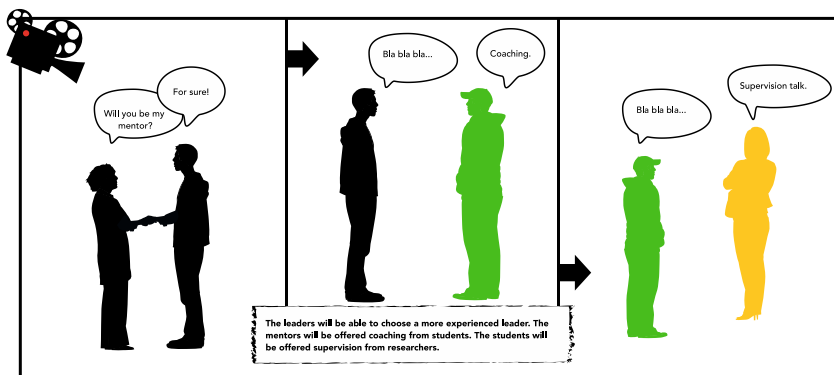
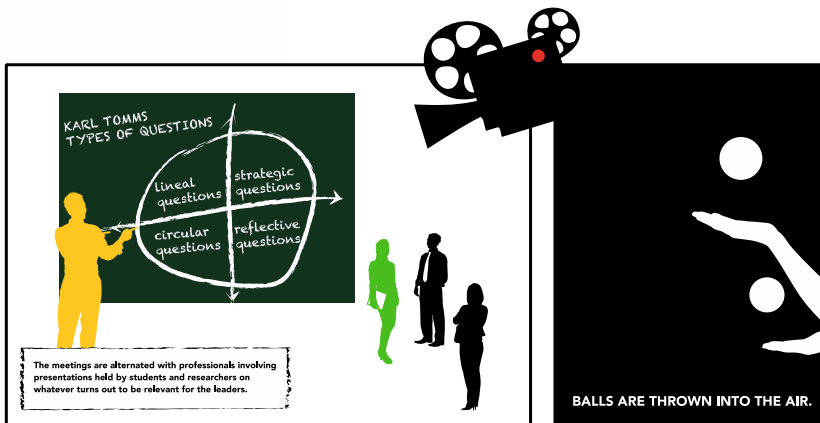


Figure 3: Leadership strip – visual of ideals for the research process and aims for fundraising purposes.



The strip presents the ideals of the research project and its plurivocal and involving intentions. It indicates a pre-scripted role cast that positions the researchers as *interviewers*, *facilitators*, *supervisors* and *teachers* that are to help the lesser-knowledgeable students in acquiring theoretical and practical skills (*knowing that* and *how*). They are also scripted to facilitate, interview and help the leaders in becoming more knowledgeable and reflexive about their everyday embodied challenges and tasks. Meanwhile, the students are positioned in the twofold character of being the *novices* supervised and taught by researchers/teachers and also the ones who are to coach the leaders, and thereby expected to perform both the role of *being helped* and also being *helpers*: indicating their transformational state of becoming knowledgeable researchers. The leaders are positioned as the ones being coached, interviewed and *receiving help* in diverse ways to refine their leadership challenges. As such, it represents a rather complex character system of helping and being helped relations and conversational forms. Thereto it indicates an expert and knowledge hierarchy picturing the researchers as experts in theories on organization, facilitation and leadership; the students as novices acquiring embodied knowledge on the topics; and the leaders as experts on everyday leadership experience. The strip invokes multiple dimensions of temporality as it shows the past initiating ideas and ideals of the research team, it shows which actions these incite the participants to perform and it gives the anticipatory idea of future events (cf. temporal multiplicity).

As such, it seems to anticipate a practical teaching setup in combination with a more consultant-inspired frame that focuses on facilitation of processes and development of organizational-related knowledge. Thus, it carries an immanent ambition to experiment with more plurivocal and collaboration-enhancing teaching programs as alternatives to common procedures at the study program of Humanistic Informatics. The common teaching practice still is the traditional lecturing setup assisted by project-based group work. In the former, the teachers are researchers and experts on topics that teach the lesser-known students in classroom setups and auditoriums. The latter builds on the Aalborg model for enhancing problem-based learning in which students works with solving problems based on semester lectures in the combination of theory and practice assisted by an academic supervisor (Kolmos et al., 2004).

The strip explicitly draws in voices from systems thinking (Karl Tomm's types of questions; Tomm, 1992) and ideals of learning and AR, invoking known consultancy and organization-enhancing methods such as *reflective teams* and *coaching setups*. It draws in known qualitative research methods like *interviews* and *video recordings*. It clearly visualizes and imagines knowledge forms and procedures that belong to a certain knowledge regime (cf. authoritative discourses and *dispositif*) within organizational studies relying on research-based, collaborative, reflection-furthering processes that straddle research, learning and consultancy aims (cf. collaborative and AR programs).

The project was granted funding, which meant that we had the possibility to transform a certain amount of our teaching hours, obligated to the faculty as terms of our employment, into research activities related to the project. With this achievement, we acquired a research assistant as part of a wage subsidy job and invited more researchers into a democratic research team.

The democratic research team

The democratic research team consisted of the three initiators (an associate professor at communication studies, my former boss from a Danish municipality in the North of Jutland and myself). Thereto we involved a research assistant and another PhD student from another humanistic study program. We also had sporadic participation by communication students at the master's level. We aspired to engage ideals of plurivocality in the research team, meaning that each researcher/student should be able to bring her individual theoretical perspectives to the scene, perspectives that are compatible with *dialogic studies* as described by Deetz (2001). Thereto all team participants should be able to use the data produced as part of various research aims. The present thesis represents my re-contextualization and resemiotization of the knowledge and data produced in relation to my particular research interests. The Bakhtinian purview was, for instance, not explicitly part of the research team's agenda (aside from being directly mentioned by Deetz, 2001, as part of dialogic studies).

The intention was to build the research team based on democratic decision-making processes where all participants had a say and in which we had to agree on the next steps taken. In the beginning, we relied on traditional tools to assist meetings, such as pre-scripted agendas and minute taking, but after a short while – as the research process proceeded and the leadership forum took form – we experienced the need for more sophisticated methods such as reflection journals, to which I will return.

Inspiration from dialogic action research

As elaborated in Bager (2014 – paper 2), we invoked voices from the dialogic tradition of AR⁶ as originated in Scandinavia and represented by Palshaugen,

⁶ AR represents an approach (not just a method, as several misjudge) or an “umbrella term” covering a wide range of research programs (Bager 2014 – paper 2). Common to most of them is an aspiration “to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives” (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 2) through reflexive developmental processes that, at a minimum, engage three elements: research, participation and action (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 6). The role of AR is not so much to solve real-life problems as to help and nurture participants to define and analyse these problems, introducing participants to alternative ways of understanding and tackling real-life challenges (Nielsen, 2012). I understand AR ideals as normative aspirations rather than possibilities – a set of norms that the researcher (and participants) can strive to achieve (Ladkin, 2003).

Gustavsen and Engelstad. This tradition aspires to have organizational development and research emerge in researcher-staged processes and to provide space for critical reflection and the possible challenging of habitual thinking and crystallized knowledge forms and discourses (Frimann & Bager, 2012; Gustavsen, 2004; Palshaugen, 2004). Describing the benefits of such reflective practices, Palshaugen writes that “we reorganize their (own) discourse in ways that make their own use of words more useful for themselves” (Palshaugen, 2001, p. 212). The basic ideals are *change* in *collaborative dialogic* processes between organizational members and researchers through a *combination of theory and practice* (Frimann & Bager, 2012; Gustavsen, 1992a). From my earlier experience with working with this research tradition, I believed that it involved the provision of ideals and tools for action to engage participatory reflective processes in which plurivocal and relational complexities of organizational realities and involvement of the professional actors in their own organizational contexts are pivotal. AR includes the somewhat obvious ideal that situated organizational members know best about their own practice and that models for and theory of organizational doings ought to be developed bottom up in participatory processes in real-life settings to apply to local complexities (Frimann & Bager, 2012; Palshaugen, 2004). Nevertheless, organizational development processes often turn the other way around as models and concepts for performing the best organizational practices often are imposed on organizational members and practices from top down. Particularly Scandinavian scholars within the dialogic tradition of AR, for instance Gustavsen and Palshaugen, advocate for the participatory design and question the transferability of organizational concepts from one context into another⁷. Building upon their work in Norwegian industrial organizations, they question the generalizability of organizational concepts and theories and call for the development of locally-founded theory that builds on everyday organizational experiences (Bager, 2013; Palshaugen et al., 1998).

The ambition to build locally-based theory in participatory processes (cf. my inductive research aims) is Bakhtinian in thinking. Bakhtin notes that “a theory needs to be bought into communion not with theoretical constructions and conceived life, but with the actually occurring event of moral being - with practical reason [...]. All attempts to force one’s way from inside the theoretical world and into actual Being-as-event are quite hopeless. The theoretically cognized world cannot be unclosed from within cognition itself to the point of becoming open to the actual once-occurrent world” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 12). As theory cannot be forced upon practice, it could very well be constituted in a co-operative relation with

⁷ The dilemma of transferring general organizational knowledge from one context to another is a well-known challenge within organizational and leadership literature (cf. the transfer problem; Stegeager et al., 2012).

practitioners. From earlier experience, I found that the most profound function as an action researcher was to facilitate and saturate development processes with an outsider perspective with the aim to gradually foster *accommodation of otherness* in research-based processes, in which the voice(s) of the researcher(s) is (are) one among others and in which training and the enhancement of *knowing how* skills in combination with theoretical perspectives (cf. *knowing that*) are part of research processes. This methodological move entails a break with a traditional image of a distanced and privileged researcher, which is consistent with the aforementioned Bakhtinian view on the dialogic researcher as inevitably being one of the (re)constituents in research processes.

Interrelatedness between the leadership forum and the democratic research team

In the design of the leadership forum, we decided to draw in a theatre metaphor from the dialogic tradition of AR, thus invoking a role distribution model in which the researchers are pre-scripted as *stage directors* and the other participants as *actors* (Bager, 2014 – paper 2; Frimann & Bager, 2012). We then intersected the model with Lewin’s (1946) process principles for AR processes. I developed the following spiral model for teaching and presentation purposes (Bager, 2014) as means for re-presenting the AR ideals and to picture the interrelatedness of the democratic research team and the leadership forum. This *resemiotization* became part of the research team’s mutual understanding and re-presentation of the forum:

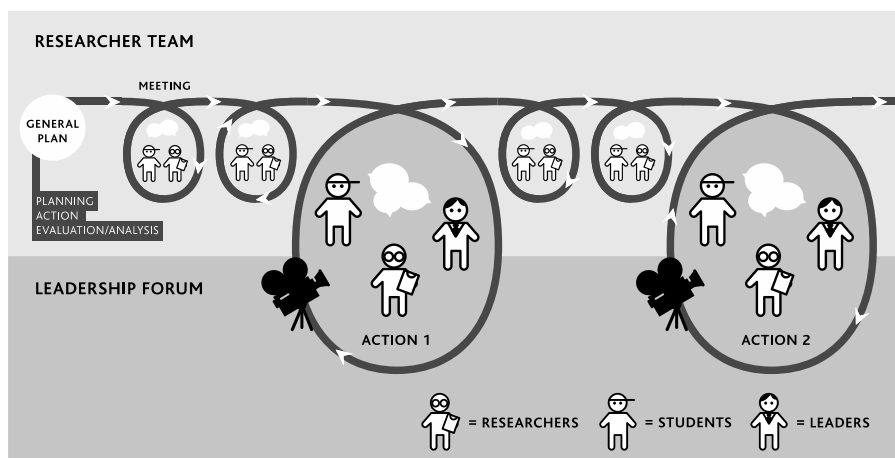


Figure 4: The entangled research team and leadership forum – the research process as a series of spiralling “decisions” (in Bager, 2014 – paper 2, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Bager et al., in review – paper 3).

The model positions the research process as a series of “spiralling decisions” made on the basis of ongoing cycles of multivoiced *planning*, *action* and

evaluation/analysis, following Lewin's (1946) principles for AR processes, in accordance with the general and continuously modifiable plan. The entanglement of the research team and leadership forum is evident; the former operates as the (in-between) research *engine room* that directs the process in accordance with voices and discourses that emerge in and ignite the leadership forum. The model also radiates the three diverse roles involved: researchers, students and leaders. The way of resemiotizing the participant types – businessperson with tie, researcher with glasses and student as a basic character – pre-positions them in a knowledge and expert hierarchy that indicates who are experts and knowledgeable. This hierarchy would have remained unnoticed if I had used other ways of indicating three participant types, for instance by the use of three different colours.

Recruitment of leaders

In agreement with our plurivocal aspirations, we decided to invite a diverse group of leaders utilizing pre-selected criteria: differences in gender, age, seniority, leader levels, professions and whether they work in governmental or private organizations. This process resulted in a group of 10 leaders from diverse organizations in the North of Jutland including leaders from the Danish defense and banking industries, manufacturing and IT companies and municipalities. They all participated on a voluntary basis with a common wish to broaden their horizons and to co-create plurivocal knowledge on leadership communication.

Each potential member received an invitation (Appendix 2), part of which read (my translation):

“In recent years, leadership has been high on the agenda in Danish organizations – private and governmental, small and big, hierarchal and flat, global and national. The phenomenon has become a mantra and often a solution to self-created problems: if something is not functioning optimally, we must have more and better leadership. Therefore, an extreme development has taken place, and concepts are standing in line offering tools for how to perform the best leadership practices. These concepts are often far from easy to transfer to leaders' everyday work lives, and it can be difficult to find proper tools for handling communicative challenges that emerge in local everyday situations. Such concepts often offer linear solutions that do not always match the lived life in a relational and complex everyday workday. In everyday organizational lives, individuals and challenges often require specific solutions to challenges to which we often do not find solutions by looking in organizational textbooks and theories. We are, indeed, curious about and interested in the lived experiences, successes and challenges that you face during your workday, and about what we can co-learn from these with an aspiration to develop your leadership communicative practices, and on that basis co-create knowledge on

leadership communication – a phenomenon that has not been particularly investigated.”

The text extract clearly invokes normative voices and discourses representing the ideals outlined above, such as the overexposure of the phenomenon leadership that has become a *mantra* (Rennison, 2011) and the *tyranny of concepts* (Bager, 2014 – paper 3) following as a consequence. Thereto it invokes the mentioned transfer problem stressing how knowledge on leadership communication ought to be developed in collaborative bottom up processes from real leaders’ experiences. It gives the anticipatory view that the leaders will have the possibility to be actively involved in the co-creation of new and important research-based knowledge building on their experiences that can inform the research field on organizations, thereby positioning their “lived experiences, successes and challenges” from being leaders as pivotal, about which the researchers are “indeed curious”.

We have now taken a look at the proactive positioning of ideals and discourses leading up to the leadership forum as decided and produced in the democratic research team. We have seen how different semiotics was translated into others (leadership strip, process model and invitation) invoking voices and discourses from the research team’s theoretical and methodological aspirations. The analysis pictures how the leadership forum and the anticipated activities and outcomes are positioned in relation to particular knowledge regimes within the research community (cf. *dispositifs* and authoritative discourses). It clearly anticipates ideals from participatory and bottom up research strategies and organizational perspectives and its tools for action within the field of *dialogic studies* to be activated in the future research process. It indicates a pre-scripted role cast in which the three diverse participant types are proactively positioned in a knowledge and expert hierarchy. I will now turn to the processual aspects that occurred in the research process in the concrete actualization of the forum and discuss how the pre-positioned ideals were actually lived out.

Actualization of the leadership forum: the action research process

We translated (resemiotized) and realized the evaluative and processual ideals from AR (cf. Lewin’s principles for AR processes) by letting voices and discourses emerging in action 1 direct the design of action 2 (Figure 4). To give an example of this processual and evaluative character of the research process, I will elaborate how the democratic research team in the in-between meetings handled a diversity of data produced in the interaction in action 1 and from this decided on a concrete content, design and tools for facilitating action 2. Following this trajectory in my data is one choice out of many possible. I chose this particular theme for analytical re-presentation in the thesis because my experiences with the earlier AR literature search revealed that insight into such data-handling processes are rarely unfolded. I have found a range of examples of how methods such as journaling, field notes and group activities are used to handle the action researcher’s subjective embeddedness in the processes to enhance the researcher’s critical reflexivity directing the

research processes⁸ (Ladkin, 2003; Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006; Nielsen, 2012; Torbert, 2001). However, the elaboration of the use of such reflective research activities often point toward researchers' own experiences and accounts of what goes on in the participatory research processes to enhance self-reflective researcher competencies. These outlines often do not draw attention to the processual handling of voices and discourses co-produced in the actual meaning-making encounters. AR reports rarely reflect and document how such voices and discourses, emerging in the collaborative events, direct the process. Process transparency is a key factor within AR, so this lack is a common criticism of AR (Frimann & Bager, 2012).

Collection of a variety of qualitative data types

In the research team, we wanted to widen and nuance traditional AR documentation processes; therefore, we drew in additional qualitative methods and cultural props, such as *video recordings*, *audio recordings*, *field notes*, *posters*, *Post-its*, *pictures of drawings on blackboards*, *interviews* and *learning journals*. As already mentioned, I found that the methods for journaling and field notes are common tools for the action researcher. Additionally we drew in methods well-known from traditional case studies. For instance, we employed *video observations*, which are often used within specific traditions of ethnography⁹ (e.g. video ethnography; Raudaskoski, 2010; Iedema et al., 2006). We were aware that the video recordings effected the meaning-making practices in the forum, but Raudaskoski (2010) points out that such research documentation strategies are not a problem as they quickly become a natural part of the setting and any orientation to one being filmed can be regarded as a 'natural' phenomenon. As the forum was situated as a site for experimenting with research and teaching procedures, we wanted to document the embodied

⁸ Within AR, it is common to operate with practices of 1st, 2nd and 3rd person research: 1st person research involves how the action researcher deals with her own subjective experiences and development as a researcher (e.g. journaling, grid analysis, drawings, etc.), 2nd person research draws attention to methods dealing with the encounters with the participants in AR processes (e.g. group activities), and the 3rd person research deals with activities that are significant for broader communities inviting others from outside of the research processes (researchers, professionals, etc.) into reflections on findings and topics from within the projects (Ladkin, 2003; Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006; Torbert, 2001). Torbert formulated these research practices within the field of Action Inquiry with the aim to enhance critical reflexivity and process transparency in AR projects pointing toward optimization of research activities (Torbert, 2001). The Journal of Action Research has incorporated Torbert's research reflective practices to be addressed in their authors' publications (Reason & Bradbury, 2006).

⁹ AR and ethnographic studies have a range of resemblances such as the use of similar qualitative data methods and the researchers' active involvement (cf. insider and emic perspective; Pike, 1954) in the field of study. I will not go further into details on this discussion.

interaction, as these recordings provide opportunities to capture aspects that are otherwise lost, to which I will return in Chapter four (cf. the ethnomethodological purview; Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Raudaskoski, 2010; Jordan & Henderson, 1995). For instance, one of my particular research aims is to conduct an embodied discourse analysis of the meaning-making practices captured in the video recordings (cf. the democratic research team’s plurivocal research aspirations; see Chapter four).

The processual and evaluative action research process

Before digging into aspects of how the democratic research team processed data, I will provide crucial insights into the activities in action 1 shown in the model below:



Figure 5: Action 1 in the leadership forum consisting of four diverse interactional setups.

The model indicates how Action 1 involved four diverse interactional setups: *an introductory part, an interview round, a dialogue round* followed by *an evaluation/outro*.

The four setups fulfilled diverse research aims:

- 1) The *introduction* provided space for the researchers to present the overall research aims and positioning of the project as dialogic studies and the implications of such (Bager et al., in review – paper 3). Thereto it gave room for all participants to present themselves and their individual expectations to the forum as well as to match the participants' expectations;
- 2) The *narrative interview round*¹⁰ provided a setup in which a researcher interviewed each leader in turn to explore their current challenges in their leadership practices and their wishes for the next actions. Meanwhile the other co-present participants listened and observed the interview efforts to gain insights into the others' accounts of their own leadership practices and challenges (Bager, accepted – paper 4);
- 3) The *dialogue round* gave space for the participants to dialogue on what went on in the introduction and interviews with the aim to discuss and document recurring common denominators on leadership communication and wishes for future actions (Bager, accepted – paper 4);
- 4) The final *evaluation round and outro* provided a possibility for all participants to reflect and comment on gains and shortcomings of the day and address their future participatory wishes and work goals.

In the following, I tap into how we processed the four data types in the in-between research activities arriving at the design of action 2.

Handling of data in the democratic research team: bottom up categorization

As elaborated in Bager (accepted – paper 4), the content and design of action 2, including the positioning play that we enacted, was pre-scripted by the research team on the basis of experiences and requests (utterances, voices, themes and demands) that emerged in action 1 (cf. the pragmatic focus in AR). I will now tap into how the democratic research team arrived at specific themes for action 2 through the processing of a diversity of data types produced in action 1. This data-handling process took place in the research activities in between actions 1 and 2 as spotlighted in the model below:

¹⁰ In the democratic research team, we found that a narrative interview setup as represented by Michael White (2005), combined with a reflective team setup, was consistent with our dissensus-based and plurivocal ideals according to *dialogic studies* (Bager, accepted – paper 4).

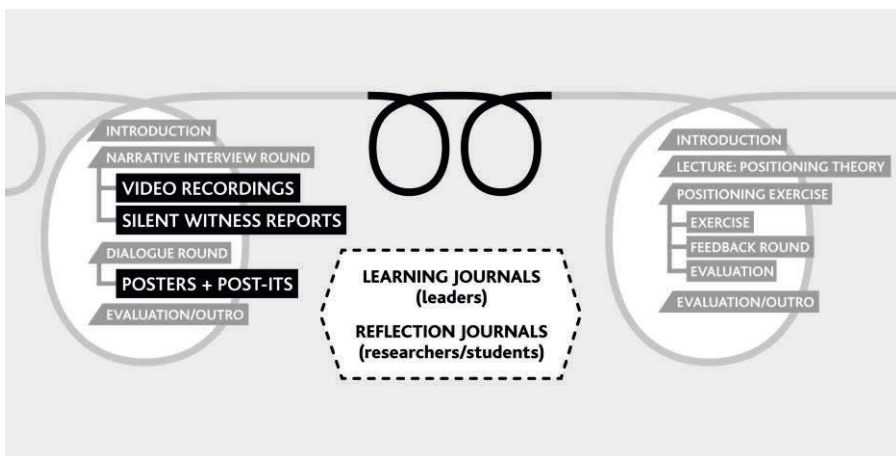


Figure 6: The research process – highlighting the research activities in between actions 1 and 2 and five data types produced.

We decided to process five crucial data types. Three of these data types were produced in the first action and two of them in between the actions as marked in Figure 6 above. These are listed and explained below:

1. Five silent witness reports (Appendix 4) from the narrative interview setup: during all interviews, a silent writing witness documented the narration efforts (Bager, accepted – paper 4).
2. Four hours of video recordings from the interviews.
3. Posters and Post-its from the dialogue round.
4. Five learning journals (Appendix 5): I created individual learning journals to support each leader's reflexivity between the actions and to enhance their individual awareness of their developing scope based on their participation in the forum and their own everyday leadership practices. These were presented as a part of the outro in action 1 and returned to us by mail, which gave us insights into their individual reflections on the activities in the forum and how and if this was connected to their personal challenges.
5. Reflection journals (Appendix 6) recorded the researchers' individual retrospective reflections on the activities in action 1.

In this processing of the data types, the democratic research team chose to focus merely on language use and written documents representing the resemiotizations of the actual meaning-making practices in the forum. Thereby we missed out on the embodied interactional features that I will re-present in the embodied discourse analysis in Chapter four. This means that the utterances, voices and discourses derived from these data types and represented in the following merely reflect discourse as language and text based.

The research assistant and I processed four of the data types and from these extracted a range of utterances, voices, themes and demands. These extractions were subsequently part of the research team's following decision-making process, in which we decided on the content and design of future actions in the leadership forum. The data-condensing process is illustrated in the model on the next page¹¹:

¹¹ All data presented are translated from Danish into English.

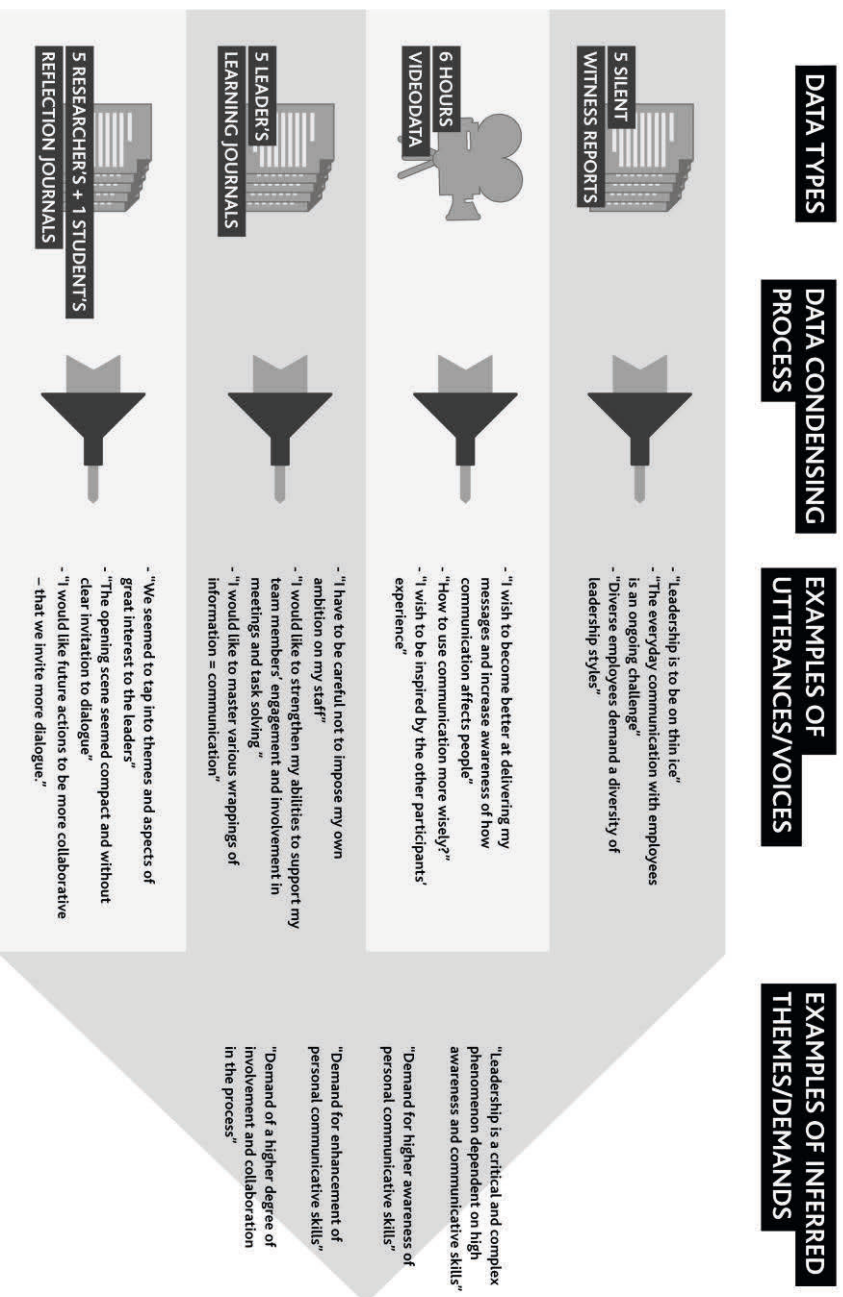


Figure 7: Data-condensing process between actions 1 and 2.

In this data-condensing process, we drew inspiration from qualitative data processing strategies in which themes and categories are extracted from data bottom up (cf. inductive aspirations; e.g. in categorization of interview materials; Halkier, 2003; Kvale, 1983). This strategy was acquired in the ambition to create *thick descriptions* that are as loyal as possible to the actual accounts worked up in the interaction in the leadership forum. It further represents our attempt to let themes and demands inferred from the data (resemiotizations of the interaction) direct the content and design of future actions (cf. the pragmatic and participant-sensitive aspirations in AR).

The model above represents my resemiotization of the data-condensing process. It merely reflects a part of the utterances, voices, themes and demands that we used as basis in our decision-making in the research team. We had to select certain themes out of many possible emerging in the data, and the data-processing model highlights some of the crucial themes that we considered to be recurring throughout the data¹². The utterances and voices from the fifth data type – the posters and Post-its produced in the dialogue round – guided us to decide on which themes to foreground. In the dialogue round, all participants were split up into two groups and asked to dialogue on common denominators that had emerged in combination with what they found to be crucial during the day. Therefore, I can say that the participants were invited into a condensing activity on the previous actions in the forum. They were further invited to produce posters reflecting this dialogue. The posters produced are illustrated in Figure 8 and 9 (my own reconstruction of the posters):

¹² For further insight into the diversity of the data corpus and its condensation, see appendix 3 - 7.

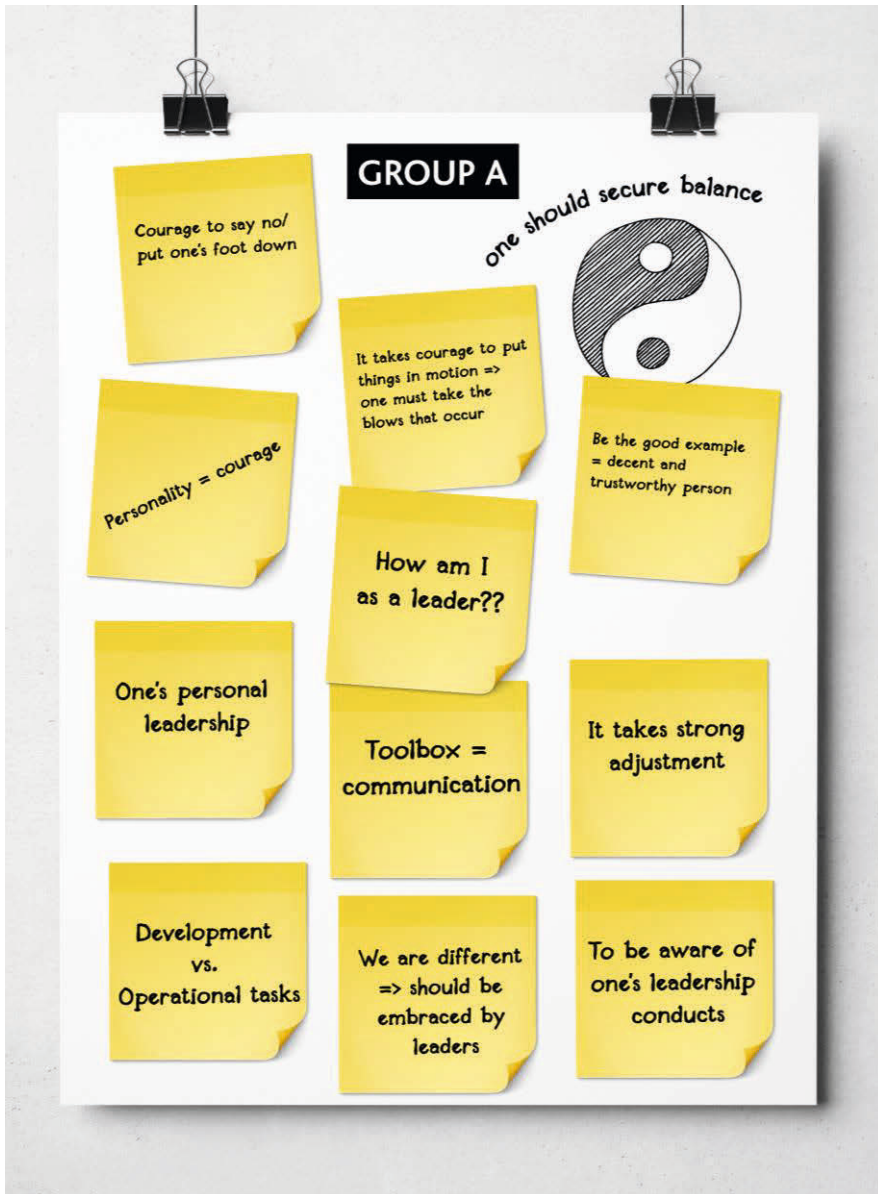


Figure 8: Poster produced in the dialogue round by group A.



Figure 9: Poster produced in the dialogue round by group B.

The posters and text on the post its clearly circle around leadership as a *courageous* achievement dependent on good *communicative skills* and leaders' *awareness of complexities and abilities* to embrace, interpret and master a *multiplicity* of needs, employees and contexts. As elaborated in Bager (accepted – paper 4), the research team found from the data and from their recollection of the activities in action 1 that several leaders articulated distress about the need to respond intelligibly to different organizational members (and for different forums/levels) with diverse communicative preferences and needs in order to read the situation and respond to it intelligibly as a means to attain desirable and appropriate outcomes.

Anticipatory requests emerging in the data

In the learning journals (Appendix 5) completed by the leaders after action 1, the leaders accounted for a range of challenges from their everyday leadership practices and clarified their development aspirations for further actions in the leadership forum. A condensation of these is reflected in the table below:

Everyday challenges foregrounded by the leaders	Developing aspirations
Delivery of information's to a diversity of employees and organizational members	To master various wrappings of information
Balancing operational and developmental tasks	To improve mastering of this balance
Being clear in my leadership (with specific attention on meta messages)	To improve personal rhetorical skills To enhance own abilities to set clear goals and communicate them
Get one's message across	To enhance clearness in own leadership communication
Communication with teams	To become better at supporting team members to become more actively involved and responsible
Be careful not to impose own ambitions on staff	Become better at helping my employees succeed

Figure 10: Table of challenges and development aspirations extracted from the leader's learning journals.

The table above clearly sums up the leaders' articulated aspirations to *acquire better abilities to master leadership communication*. As highlighted in Bager (accepted – paper 4), some of the leaders' development wishes in the leadership forum were to gain communicative insights and tools for handling what I interpret to be the multiplicity of embodied voices and discourses that inhabit their organizations and call for reflective skills (both communicatively and analytically).

As noted in Bager (accepted – paper 4), based on the above-elaborated data processing, the research team as a part of action 2 decided to deliver a lecture and develop a positioning exercise based on assumptions and concepts from positioning theory in the field of discursive psychology¹³. The researchers have theoretical and

¹³ The positioning perspectives and concepts introduced in the lecture were inspired by Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) and their contributions to positioning theory and discursive

analytical experience with this tradition, and they decided that the basic assumptions and concepts might provide the desired insights into context-dependent, complex and often ambiguous aspects of interaction. The positioning exercise was intended to add a *knowing how* dimension to the *knowing that* representation of positioning theoretical aspects in the lecture. It was also on the basis of the above-listed reflections from the researchers' reflection journals (Appendix 6) that we decided to attempt to enhance more plurivocal dialogue by providing more space for practice voices to enter into dialogue in action 2, to which I will return in Chapter four.

Challenges in the democratic research team due to sociopolitical circumstances in university settings

The forum concluded earlier than expected although the evaluation rounds and data seem to reveal that we tapped into something highly relevant and useful for the leaders. From their accounts, their completion of the learning journals and their attendance in the first two actions, it appears that they benefitted from their participation and wished to continue prioritizing time to participate in future actions. Nevertheless a range of personal and sociopolitical circumstances in the university context contributed to the closing; for instance, one researcher tragically became ill and died from cancer, the research assistant's wage subsidy period expired, and the researcher from the other humanistic study program had to withdraw to finish up his PhD project. As a consequence, we were two researchers, with relatively large teaching obligations, left to run the forum. Thereto we experienced how difficult it was to maintain a research project that involved collaboration with external participants in contemporary Danish university settings even though AAU and the Danish government insist on furthering closer collaboration between *business*, *education* and *research* as part of their political and strategic agenda ("Aalborg Universitet", n.d.). Such a collaborative project requires a high degree of administrative, coordinative and maintaining activities that we found hard to attend to due to lack of time and resources. During the same period as the unfolding of the leadership forum, we experienced an increase in our obligations to teach at AAU due to cost savings in combination with an increase in teaching activities. In recent years, the Danish government has decided on a range of direction-setting motions that are reflected in a higher intake of students. This change meant that we, at the study program of communication at AAU, expanded the student intake by more than 100 % (from 120 to 270 students) over the relatively short period of two years (Albæk, 2012, july 30; "Opfordring: opgiv", 2013). Concurrently we had to address requirements of accreditation (akkr.dk), which means that we rethought and quality-assured the study program to reflect the spirit of the time as well as governmental and societal demands. It is obvious that

psychology. As the purpose of this chapter is to present the data-handling process in the research team, I will not go into further details on the theoretical aspects from this perspective.

the accreditation process, the extensive expansion of student intake and university cost-cuttings triggered an increase in the staff's workload in teaching, coordination and administration efforts. Consequently, we had to postpone actions 1 and 2 a couple of times. We found it very difficult to find the necessary time and resources to attend properly to the maintenance of the leadership forum so that it met our requirements of good research practice. Thereof we came to the conclusion to close it down after action two even though we had plans and backing for three additional actions. As such, we as part of a governmental institution experienced the very same mechanisms as noted in Chapter two. These point to how contemporary organizational realities increasingly are exposed to new public management strategies and functionalistic management techniques supported by the Danish government in order to streamline and make more efficient organizational practices following suit with an advanced liberal state (Bager, 2014 – paper 2; Bager & Mølholm, submitted; Karlsen & Villadsen, 2008). The effects of these streamlining and cost-saving initiatives led us to deprioritize the research-based leadership forum even though it met the demands of AAU's and the government's ideals, strategies and political agenda (cf. the aforementioned gap between organizational sayings and doings and "Orwellian organizational doublespeak").

As elaborated in Bager (2014) and noted in Chapter one, following the thoughts of dialogicality requires a shift in organizational attitude. This shift is comparable with the research team's aspirations to enact dialogic studies and foster plurivocal practices. Such shifts demand time and ongoing accommodation of otherness to grasp, process and adjust one's actions accordingly. My retrospective judgment of the process in the research team is that we did not prioritize or find the needed time to explore such changes in attitude and adopt new actions and conducts in agreement with such. I will return to this discussion in Chapter five.

In the next chapter, I zoom closer in on analytical findings from the embodied interactional patterns that are prompted in five various interactional setups in the leadership forum. The close-up discursive analytical findings that I will present provide insights into how voices and discourses displayed through the process analysis are resemiotized and reconfigured in the actualization of the forum.

CHAPTER 4

CLOSE-UP DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FIVE VARIOUS INTERACTIONAL SETUPS IN THE LEADERSHIP FORUM

In this chapter, I present my findings from doing close-up discourse analysis of the embodied interactional patterns prompted in situ in the leadership forum (cf. the once occurring being of event; Bakhtin, 1982). I answer my research question of *how to analyse plurivocal dialogue*, this time studying the dialogic encounters as embodied identity creative place-bound activities. The findings that I will present are thoroughly elaborated in the latter three papers (Bager et al., in review – paper 3; Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5). The close discourse analyses are conducted of five various interactional setups in the forum as shown in the model below:

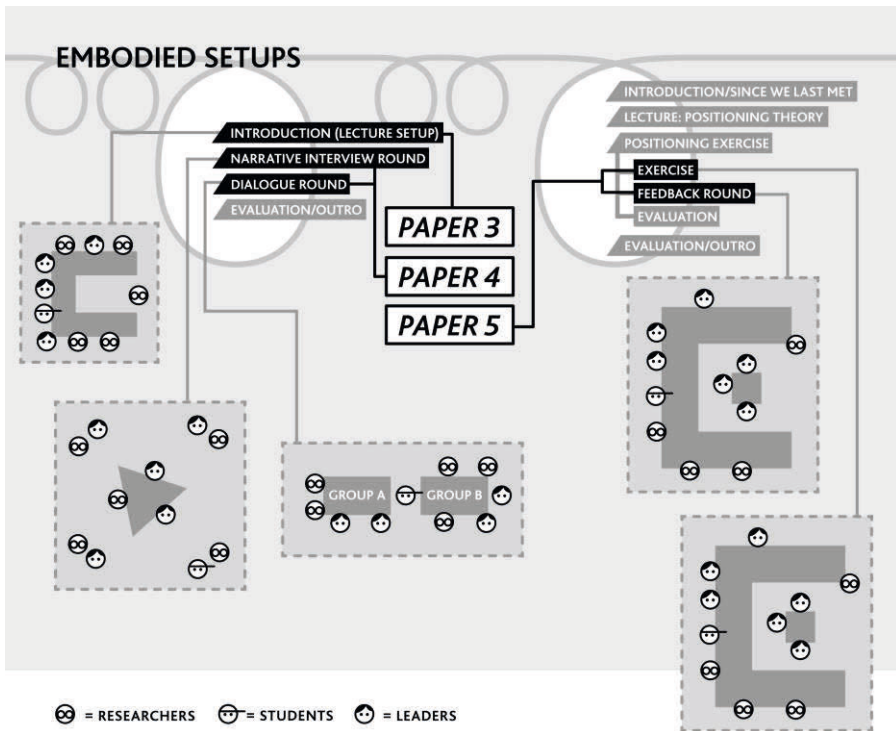


Figure 11: Spiral model and illustration of the five embodied setups for close-up discourse analysis.

The model clarifies how I zoom in on five incidences of embodied meaning-making in both actions 1 and 2 together with the analytical centre of attention in respectively papers 3, 4 and 5. Hence I follow the analytical trajectories that are already laid out in Chapter three as I zoom closer in on the embodied interactional patterns in the narrative interview round and the dialogue round in action 1. As elaborated earlier, the democratic research team extracted utterances and voices from the interview round which directed the design of action 2 and the forming of the positioning exercise. In the following sections, I provide an even deeper look into the embodied interactional circumstances that directed the research process and the identity creative practices. I conducted the discourse analyses after the forum, which means that the analytical points I am about to unfold were not noticed or discussed by the research team during the leadership forum and therefore had no consequences on the AR process in the leadership forum.

Two diverse analytical frameworks for close-up discourse analysis

In the three analytical papers (papers 3, 4 and 5), I use two diverse analytical frameworks. In all three papers, I invoke Linell's (Linell, 2009) Bakhtinian-inspired quadruple model for dialogue and interaction analysis. In the following I present the two diverse frameworks.

Membership categorization analysis

In Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), we combine Linell's model's focus with close-up analytical tools and strategies from membership categorization analysis (MCA). This analytical frame allows us to study the participants' other-orientation efforts in combination with their embodied place-bound categorical work and show how this affects the meaning-making practices and lines of subjectification prompted in the forum (Bager et al., in review – paper 3).

Positioning and small story analysis

In Bager (accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), I combine the quadruple model's other-orientation with *small story analysis* as represented by Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) within the fields of discourse psychology and positioning theory. This frame allows a scrutiny of the participants' other-orientation as well as how they co-create stories in situ. In combination with Linell's quadruple and focus on other-orientation, this allows me to study the interaction and capture the heteroglossic nature of identity work. As elaborated in Bager (accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), neither dialogicality, governmentality, nor small story analysis provide tools for analysing the embodied features of interaction even though all three perspectives indicate the importance of embracing the material and multimodal aspects in interaction analysis. Therefore I draw inspiration from

Goodwin's (2000) perspectives on contextual configurations and Kendon's (2004) gesture studies.

Both analytical frameworks allow me to study embodied identity work and its intrinsic heteroglossic nature that might otherwise have remained unnoticed. Thereto they open up for straddling the local and broader dimensions of discourse. They allow me to compare *dispositif* with Bakhtin's and Linell's notions of dialogicality as sites of *heteroglossia* with *centripetal* and *centrifugal forces*, orientation to a diversity of *third parties* and to *multiple temporal features*. These methodological moves make it possible to study *dialogue* and *dispositif* as related concepts that are lived out in situated practices. Thus, the formations of force relations and the *conduct of conduct* (cf. governmentality) are perceived as pervasive phenomena that permeate and condition everyday embodied discursive interaction and meaning-making practices (Bager, accepted – paper 3, submitted – paper 4; Bager et al., in review).

Before tapping into the concrete analytical findings, I will make three crucial detours: first 1) I will present Linell's quadruple model as this recurs in all the following discourse analyses and affects the analytical findings; then 2) I will display a methodological orientation from ethnomethodology that also influences all analyses, as both MCA, small story analysis (with its sequential interpretation) and Goodwin's contextual configurations draw from this tradition; and finally 3) I will outline how I processed the video data preparing it for close-up analysis. Here I am inspired by Jordan and Henderson (1995) and their suggestions for thorough video decoding processing.

Linell's quadruple model for dialogue analysis

The model allows me to study how the participants orient toward a diversity of third parties from within and without the creative events (cf. other-orientation). It captures how the participants draw in voices and discourses from the past, in the present and in anticipation of future events (cf. temporal multiplicity).

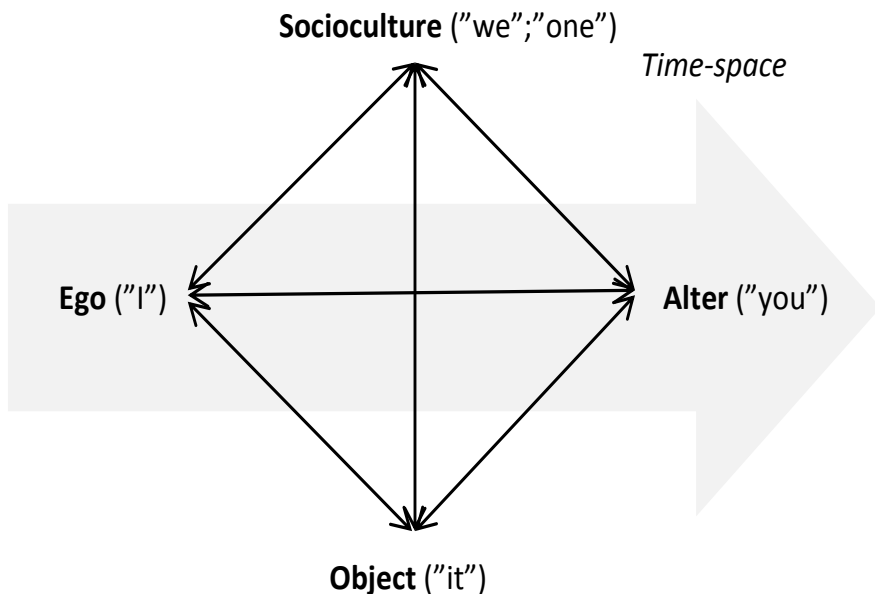


Figure 12: Linell's quadruple model (after Linell, 2009, p. 95; in Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5).

As elaborated in papers 3, 4 and 5, what is of particular interest for my analyses is Linell's involvement of the complex coordinate “*We’/’One’/('They')/generic ‘You’*” (Linell, 2009, p. 95) indicating *socioculture*. When added to more traditional triadic models' coordinates, this provides a more nuanced model for the analysis of meaning-making and dialogue than, for instance, pragmatic triads consisting of “I” (self, Ego), “you” (Alter) and “it” (referents) (Linell, 2009, p. 95). With this fourth coordinate, Linell differentiates between a diversity of third parties spanning from co-present overhearers to abstract ideologies thereby embracing aspects from both near and broader dimensions of discourses in the analysis (Linell, 2009). Additionally, the model houses a time-space continuum, thereby encompassing complex and non-linear temporal aspects of meaning-making (cf. temporal multiplicity). What Linell lacks is a thorough consideration and tools for analysis of the role of the material setting and the embodiment of its (also non-human) participants for the sense-making processes. When I analyse the leadership forum encounters as attempts at conduct of conduct, I analyse the concrete sayings and doings in the material settings by embodied participants. This methodological move brings Linell's “I/you/we/they” quadruple even closer to the situational particularities and, therefore, shows how the fairly abstract notion of governmentality and conduct of conduct can be detected in unfolding practices. Also, notions such as subjectification and *dispositif* become analysable.

As elaborated in Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), Linell (2009) concludes his treatise by recommending that the concept of dialogical theories should be replaced by the more precise interactionist and contextualist theories of sense-making, which comes close to how ethnomethodology describes sense-making practices.

The ethnomethodological purview

As elaborated in Chapter two, the Bakhtinian framing entails meaning and subjectivity as co-produced by the full social interaction of all participants and voices from within and without the creative events (Bager, 2013; Linell, 2009). This framing is comparable to the ethnomethodological purview as represented by Antaki and Widdicombe (1998), Goodwin (2000) and Raudaskoski (1999). In such perspectives, participants are constantly making interpretations of others' actions: They continuously select, pay attention to, pick up and elicit – that is, they make sense of others who are inevitably and continuously bound to the in situ creative events and practical circumstances. Garfinkel originally coined ethnomethodology as a descriptive discipline that does not engage in the explanation or evaluation of the particular social order under study. However, I link up to current scholars, such as Nicolini (2009b), who attempt to explain and evaluate concrete interactional patterns by trailing connections from the actual meaning-making practices to broader discursive circumstances. The heritage from ethnomethodology demands that canonical descriptions of practices are not enough. Instead of relying on theories about social life, it insists on close-up analysis of situated encounters. Its ideals suit my research aims and aspirations to bridge the gap that often exists between organizational *knowing that* and *how* practicing and in bringing organizational practices to the fore in organizational theorizing. It draws lines back to Garfinkel's work and claims that the analytic gaze that ought to start with the situated actions and how that "produces the actors, orders, and motivations that it does" (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 82).

The ethnomethodological scope also entails a thorough processing of the video data from the forum to prepare it for analysis following the detailed methodological procedures informed by Jordan and Henderson (1995) outlined below.

Video processing

Jordan and Henderson (1995) offer procedures and tools for processing video data and address what they term the schism between representation and present-ness in data (p. 50). In agreement with my research aims, they oppose scholars' common use of secondary interpretations as, for instance, researchers' reconstructions of people's accounts and they claim that "the events themselves have disappeared; what passes as data is actually their reconstruction (interviews, field obs., records of experiments)" (Jordan & Henderson, 1995, p. 51). They emphasize that researchers have no chance of reversing or backtracking their findings from such data and

foreground video data as valuable tools when studying learning situations and/or work practices (Jordan & Henderson, 1995, p. 50). In line with my methodological aspirations, they note that video data can be potently used to overcome gaps between what people say and what they actually do when interested in what really happened rather than accounts of it. Drawing in their suggestions for interaction analysis assisted by video data and its processing can help theorizing to be responsive to the phenomenon itself rather than representational systems that reconstruct it and constrain the direction of the analyst (p. 51).

Content logs

I have used two of their crucial strategies for video data processing: *content logs* and *data-sessions*. Following Jordan and Henderson’s recommendations, immediately after the two actions were captured on video, I listed the content in the forum in a log as shown in the figure below:

Sequence	Content description	Memo	Analytical points
	The first couple of minutes are lacking in the recordings		
00:00:00:00 Only camera B	10 participants are sitting at tables, set in a horseshoe formation. Jørgen is standing on the floor between the horseshoe table formation and a blackboard. The blackboard is situated in front of a window section offering a view out over the fjord. Jørgen points continuously toward a model on the blackboard (Deetz’s (2001) quadrant model) while he speaks toward the participants. Mikala steps behind camera A and presses a button	Embodied positioning: Jørgen seems to take the stage as a teacher/expert Theoretical perspectives are strongly represented in this opening setup	Crucial event – it seems to direct the rest of the forum. Framing and positioning

Figure 13: Extract of the content log of the interaction in action 1 (see appendix 8).

I listed the content while my memory was still fresh, “allowing annotations and explications of events that may not be possible later” (Jordan & Henderson, 1995, p. 52). I indexed the content log by the time stamps from the videotapes and listed a rough description of what happened under the heading “content description”. In the logging process, I added the two right-aligned columns “memo” and “analysis points”, which became important as my processing of the video data proceeded. In the memo column, I continuously noted what appeared important or what piqued

my curiosity. I worked my way through the two logs on actions 1 and 2 (see appendix 8) assisted by repeated viewing of the video data and, as Jordan and Henderson (1995) suggest, previously invisible aspects became apparent to me. Following their invitations, I made no attempts at this stage to provide consistency or evenness, and the listings provided an overview of the data corpus. In this processing, I became interested in certain sequences and issues, which provided a basis for the selection of data bits for close discourse analysis. The column “analytical points” was then inserted as one of the last steps before the final selection of video extracts for close transcription as represented in articles 3, 4, and 5. It was in this inductive process that positioning theory and small story analysis became central methodological choices. Through this thorough processing of the video data, I became more and more certain that it was other-orientation, positioning and the participants’ small story efforts that could be possible analytical tools to zoom in on what appeared interesting for further scrutiny.

Data-sessions

The next step was group work or data-sessions through which I presented my work to other researchers. I have had the pleasure to present transcripts from 12 diverse extracts from the data corpus in four diverse data-session setups. Two of them were staged as part of my research group Mattering’s everyday recurring research activities in which I had the opportunity to present the data and receive my colleagues’ feedback and inputs. My colleagues work with a variety of discourse analytical perspectives in studying diverse social practices, forming an impressive pool of experience and knowledge from which I have benefitted. The two other occasions were in relation to two diverse PhD seminars: one in the company of Curtis LeBaron on applying discourse analysis at AAU and the other in the presence of Marjorie Goodwin and Charles Goodwin in a research workshop in the spring 2014 at AAU on doing embodied discourse analysis. My colleagues, together with Curtis LeBaron and the Goodwins, have a long experience with sequential analysis, so their comments strengthened the analytical base. Through these data-sessions, I gained surpluses of seeing by receiving feedback from others – representing both trained and newcomers in discourse studies. It allowed me to see the data through the eyes of the others’ perspectives and attentional foci as well as to accommodate otherness (cf. dialogicality). These experiences made me qualify my focus of analysis as it supported some of my specific interests and interpretations of the data bits while making me nuance and see new and surprising aspects that I had so far overlooked. This process was priceless, and I am very thankful toward the skilled people that paid so serious and insightful attention to my data and helped me to move forward with my analysis.

MAIN ANALYTICAL FINDINGS FROM THE INTRODUCTION AND OPENING LECTURE

In paper 3, *Dialogue and governmentality-in-action: a discourse analysis of a leadership forum* (Bager, Jørgensen, & Raudaskoski, in review), we zoom in on the interactional particularities in the opening of action 1, the *introduction (lecture setup)*, which is highlighted in the model below:

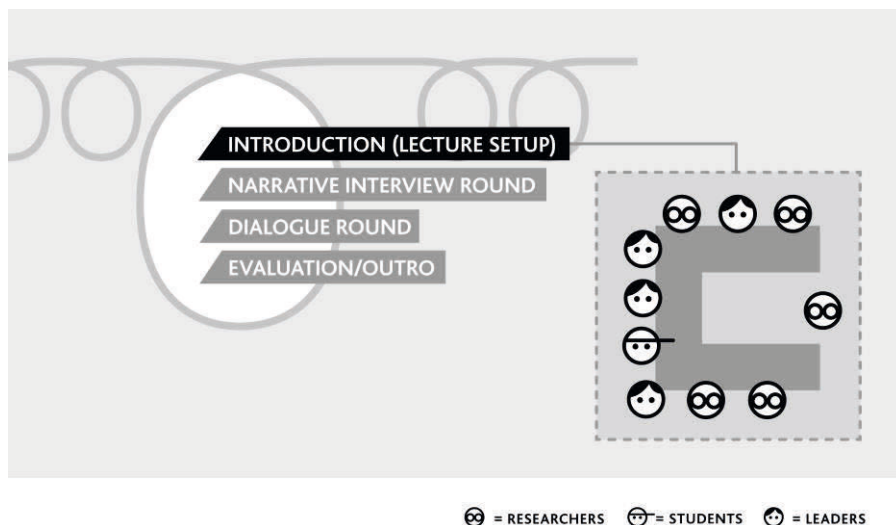


Figure 14: Process model of action 1 highlighting the embodied setup in the introduction.

The model indicates the embodied features of the three diverse interaction setups in action 1. The highlighted setup indicates how the tables were set in a horseshoe formation and how the three diverse participant types were physically positioned.

Writing this paper together with my two supervisors provided for me a crucial opportunity to draw on their diverse expertise and accommodate otherness in the scrutiny of my data. Kenneth Jørgensen (my second supervisor) holds great knowledge and experience with applying Foucauldian thoughts on organizational matters. Pirkko Liisa Raudaskoski (my main supervisor) has experience with applying discourse analysis (including Membership Categorization Analysis, MCA) to a diversity of practices and connecting findings from in situ accomplishments to broader discursive circumstances and more abstract philosophical and theoretical perspectives. We quickly determined that my main interest, Bakhtinian dialogicality, could possibly serve as an interesting intermediary allowing us to stretch the traditional Foucauldian gazing and take close analysis of situated encounters into account. Through this methodological combination, we drew in the local accomplishment of action and identity and the

more abstract discourses, something that we found that the (abstract) notion of conduct of conduct implies (cf. governmentality). From our judgement, it allowed us to study “conduct” and *dispositif* as action-in-the-world and not merely as theoretical or taken-for-granted concepts that do not need closer (empirical) scrutiny. We made a connection through *dispositif* and Bakhtinian dialogue to governmentality-in-action and demonstrated, through a careful discourse analysis, some of the practices, rationalities and procedures of governmentality-in-action in the leadership forum.

The tools for close-up discourse analysis are drawn from MCA combined with a sequential analysis, which allowed analytical attention to embodied category-bound features of interaction. This approach assists Linell’s model and the Bakhtinian focus on other-orientation and dialogue in explaining how diverse forms diverse forms of categorical incumbency (Eglin & Hester, 1992) are present in the data and how they contribute to which categories are actualized. The methodological frame also reflects how membership categorization and embodied interaction relate to each other. We see how the material features of the environment, the place and its objects have both material and meaningful affordances (and limits) that are essential for the ongoing action. Through this methodological package, we show how governmentality and *dispositifs* work as an “entangled multilinear ensemble of lines of visibility, enunciation, force and subjectification, that is always drifting and changing” (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 159-160), in which Linell’s third parties are present as authoritative discourses that seek to ascribe and govern what is going on.

The introduction

The analysis confirms that the opening lecture represented a crucial interactional setup as the basis for the rest of the collaborative research process. The analytical findings from additional scenes show how the participants continuously orient back to occurrences from this particular opening event. The contour picture in Figure 15 below gives an idea of the embodied interaction setup.

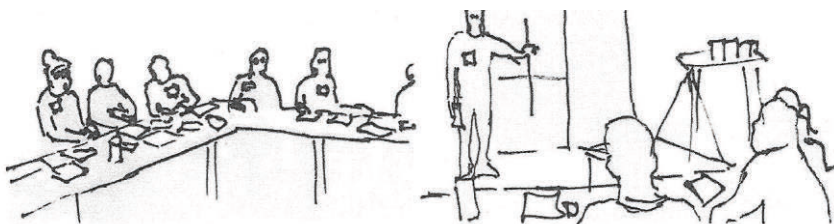


Figure 15: Contour picture from the opening lecture in action 1 (Bager et al., in review – paper 3).

The analysis reveals how the researchers in the very opening of the forum categorize it as the traditional embodied teaching setup so well-known from their everyday work practices. Further, the analysis shows how the embodied setup affects the interaction. For instance, the university classroom manifested and was enacted through the horseshoe table formation, nametags and a lecturer in front of a blackboard drawing models and explaining them to the participants sitting along the table formation. This prompted interactional patterns well-known from teachers' interactions with students in a traditional lecture setup. From this beginning, the pre-set expert hierarchy as shown in the process analysis in Chapter three was manifested: as we note in paper 3, when a participant (one of the researchers) stood up in this room in this building in front of a blackboard, that scenic incumbency already confirmed the researchers' identities as knowledgeable theorists even if the tables were configured either as a horseshoe (for the lectures) or later on in groups (for interviews and dialogue rounds). This physically emphasized the dialogic nature of the setup. As explained in the previous chapter, this role and knowledge distribution was already indicated in the resemiotizations of the research team's research aspirations (e.g. in the leadership strip (Figure 3) and spiral model (Figure 4)), which were noted to be in tune with the role distribution model inspired by the dialogic tradition of AR.

To give another example from the analysis of the in situ categorical work, the interactional patterns showed how diverse sets of categories resulted in various identity constructions, such as 1) a workshop participant or 2) a leader. This pairing of categories implies certain standardized rights and obligations (Silverman, 1998) manifested in the forum (e.g. leader – employees). In this case, the collections made relevant are twofold: on the one hand, the leaders are categorized as workshop participants which is coupled to education and on the other as leaders tied to their occupation. This pairing resulted in the leaders under scrutiny inferring certain category-bound rights and obligations: they were obliged not merely to be active participants in the educational situation (students) but also to demonstrate the reason for being there and to become new and more insightful leaders to their employees (the other part of the categorical pairing).

Scenic incumbency

The opening lecture contains various examples of how the embodied interaction hampered the centripetal forces. For instance, when a participant (one of the leaders) tried to enter the scene and seemed to interpret the theoretical perspectives into everyday utterances and voices from his own organizational reality, the lecturer quickly responded with utterances orienting toward theoretical third parties which were seen to lead the interaction back on the theoretical (*knowing that*) track laid out from the very beginning. So, the scenic incumbency in the lecture setup reflects the researcher lecturing as the knowledgeable theorist and the leader asking questions as the less-knowledgeable student that has to be taught by the researcher. This pattern was seen as characteristic to most of the opening lecture which was

also reflected in utterances in the research team's reflection journals, as presented in Chapter three. For instance, in the following utterance reflected in Figure 7 (the data-condensing process model): "The opening scene seemed too compact and without clear invitation to dialogue" (Appendix 6).

Zooming out: trailing connections from the discourse analysis

From the analysis, I (together with my co-writers) conclude that the lines of enunciation (Deleuze, 1992) from the beginning became constrained, and the interactional situation in the opening lecture seemed to foster certain centripetal forces of teaching and research, rather than opening up for diversity and furthering the centrifugal forces. Instead of inviting a multiplicity of voices as intended, the theoretical voices closed down and restricted the possibility for other voices and discourses to emerge, for instance, voices representing practice as requested by the ideals of plurivocality and the invitation. In other words, hegemonic discourses (cf. *dispositifs* and authoritative discourses) governed the situation.

We showed how the participants got caught up in prevalent discourses and especially how the university as a setting (inadvertently) contributes to reproducing teaching practices that constrain the plurivocal ideals of the forum. We analysed how the interactional patterns in the opening lecture seem to produce actions supportive of direct opposite ideals (monoglossia) rather than the intended plurivocality (heteroglossia). Thus, the chapter provides an example of a study where a topical governmentality concern (dialogue as a conduct of conduct in leadership education) can be tackled by a close discourse analysis (MCA) of the observed embodied discursive practices.

The findings presented above resemble those of the aforementioned scholars' questioning of the taken-for-granted assumptions of dialogue as a positive phenomenon with attached positive emancipative consequences (Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Karlsen & Villadsen, 2008; Linell, 2009; Mårtsin et al, 2011; Phillips, 2011; Phillips et al, 2012). Scholars further point out how dialogic encounters sometimes cause the exact opposite (Olesen & Nordentoft, 2013; Phillips, 2011). It excited my curiosity to pay close-up discourse analytical attention to additional setups to see which forces of interaction (cf. the centripetal and centrifugal forces of *heteroglossia*) and lines of subjectification this would give rise to.

MAIN ANALYTICAL FINDINGS FROM AN INTERVIEW ROUND AND A DIALOGUE ROUND

In paper 4, *Organizational (auto)-ethnography: an interaction analysis of identity work through the study of other-orientation and storytelling practices in a leadership development forum*, Bager (accepted), I zoom in on the *narrative interview round* and a *dialogue round* as part of action 1. These are highlighted in the model below, where it is evident they follow the opening lecture setup that was the centre of attention in paper 3:

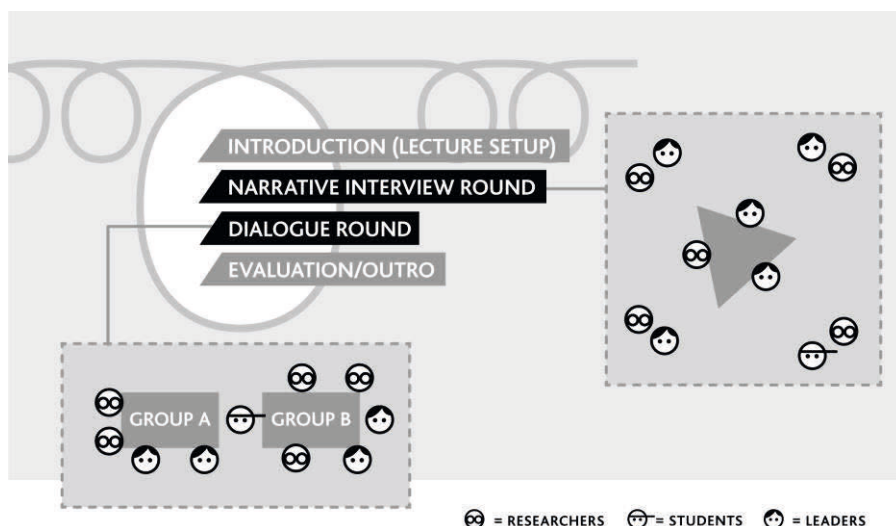


Figure 16: Process model of action 1 highlighting the embodied setup in the narrative interview round and the dialogue round.

I use a positioning theoretical lens to assist the Foucauldian and Bakhtinian thoughts in forming a frame for close discourse analysis. As part of the ethnographic analysis, this allows me to study the participants' small story efforts in combination with their orientation toward third parties from inside and outside of the situation, as well as from the past, present and anticipatory creative events (cf. temporal multiplicity). The lens focuses on how the interlocutors work up stories in situ to juggle claims about who they are. Further it allows me to ask questions regarding how the participants create a sense of self and identity that manoeuvres simultaneously between opposing established narratives (cf. authoritative discourses and *dispositifs*) that give guidance to one's actions and constrain and delineate agency (Bamberg, 1997, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). In other words, it gives me an analytical orientation that attends to the identity creative practices and lines of subjectification (Deleuze,

1992) that emerge in the forum in the schism between opposing narratives/discourses.

The analysis is inspired by an auto-ethnographic touch as I provide my insider and subjective experiences to the close-up discourse analysis. This approach brings in important context-dependent knowledge that could not have been seen by merely studying the video data (Baarts, 2010). As one of the overall aims of this thesis is to place the research process and the attached dialogic practices under scrutiny, this insider dimension brings significant insights into the decision-making and processual aspects within the forum. For instance, I inform the analysis and following discussions and trailing out connections (cf. zooming in and out movement) with the insider knowledge related to the theoretical and methodological considerations made in the democratic research team in their use of specific qualitative techniques, such as the narrative interview setup used for analysis.

The narrative interview setup

I will now sum up the main analytical findings from the embodied interactional particularities in the narrative interview round. The embodied setup is pictured in the model below:

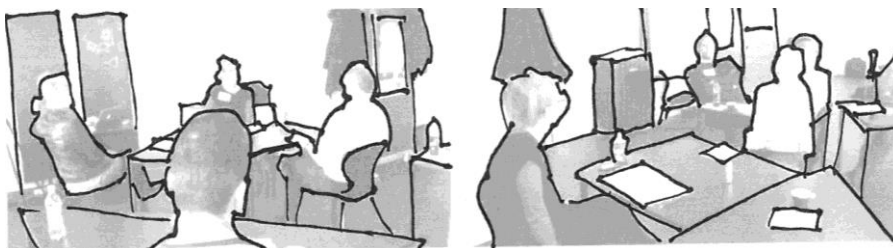


Figure 17: Contour picture of a narrative interview setup in action 1 (in Bager, accepted – paper 4).

Positioning-wise, this interactional situation prompted rather researcher-controlled and complex interactional patterns in which the participants were positioned in line with pre-defined role definitions. As described below, the interaction and participation order that emerged reproduced similar pre-defined roles and expert positions as the opening lecture. I noted that these were in line with the pre-defined hierarchy showing through in diverse modes in the analysis of the resemiotization process, as described in the process analysis in the previous chapter. As part of the interview round, these positions followed suit with the interview method from

narrative research as represented by Michael White¹⁴ (2005). As elaborated in Chapter three, the researchers adopted this method as means for interviewing the leaders on their everyday leadership experiences, as they found the principles immanent in this technique to be in line with the ideals of dialogic studies.

In the part of the interview sequence selected for analysis, the primary interlocutors were three participants. The researcher (the author of the present thesis) was positioned as the interviewer, and the two leaders served respectively as an interviewee and a silent witness being guided through the interview by the researcher. In the selected data extract, only the interviewer and the interviewee are verbally active. As such, the interactional pattern positions who is to ask questions and to facilitate the interaction process (the researcher) and who is to answer questions (the leader). As noted earlier, this interactional pattern positions the participants in an expert and knowledge hierarchy implying who is the expert in performing the interview, asking questions and taking charge of the storyline produced (the researcher) and who is the expert in accounting for everyday leadership experiences (the leader).

The interview method was crossed with aspects from reflective teams, positioning the rest of the participants as observers of the interactions among the interview trio in the middle of everybody's attention (human and non-human, as for instance the cameras, audio recorders and the table formation). As noted, this setup was selected by the research team as means for providing all participants opportunity to listen to each leader's accounts of their everyday leadership activities and challenges. In the analysis, I show how the embodied setup played a crucial part in positioning the interaction within a rather complex audience design which prompted a fairly risky interaction order (Goffman, 1983). There seemed to be a lot at stake identity-wise because the three participants in the centre of attention had to keep up good appearances and a positive face (Goffman, 1955) toward multiple dimensions (e.g. the rest of the co-present others and anticipated future research activities, e.g., resemitizations of the data for research ends).

From looking through the video material from all five interviews (resemitized into text in the content log from action 1; Appendix 8), I can confirm that all participants maintained the being-doing participation order and served as good research participants throughout all five interview rounds.

¹⁴ As noted in Bager (accepted – paper 4), the democratic research team found that the ideals and tools for action in this narrative tradition and the interview setup suited their intentions of enacting dialogic studies (Deetz 2001). I will not go further into details on the specificities of this method.

The dialogue round



Figure 18: Contour picture of a dialogue round in action 1 (in Bager, accepted – paper 4).

Contrary to the interactional pattern in the interview setup, the dialogue round triggered a looser and less researcher-controlled pattern. It was not evident who were the leaders, researchers or students. Thereby the positioning of the participants in the expert and knowledge hierarchy that shone through in all the previous analyses (in the process analysis in Chapter three as well as the close-up discourse analyses of the introduction and the interview round) was not clearly detectable in the selected data bit from the dialogue round. It is interesting to note that the instructions for the dialogue round did not include a pre-set role cast, to which I will return.

The analysis revealed how the participants contested each other's utterances and voices. From this, I conclude that the dialogue round furthered centrifugal rather than centripetal forces, as the interaction seemed to open up for a diversity of (practice-based and theoretical) voices and discourses; all the participants negotiated opinions and accommodated otherness.

Heteroglossia and identity work in the interactional setups

The analyses of both the interview round and the dialogue round reveal how the participants oriented toward a diversity of others and invoked a multiplicity of voices and diverse temporal features. In other words, the participants drew in a diverse set of utterances, voices and discourses from inside and outside of the creative event as well as from the past, present and in anticipation of future events (cf. *heteroglossia*). The interactional pattern came through as a part of their positioning efforts and co-accomplishments of doing identity and co-production of knowledge.

Both analyses show how the embodiment of the interaction played a crucial part in positioning the participants. In the interview setup, it furthered the pre-set knowledge and expert hierarchy. In the dialogue round, it seemed to break with this pre-inferred hierarchy and invited a looser and less researcher-controlled interaction order, as well as a less complex audience design. All participants were seen to enact doing-being good research participants (participants in a task) and maintaining the overall interaction order in agreement with the research team's pre-scripts.

On both occasions, the participants worked up discourses that are opposing within dominant discourses from broader circumstances. I further note how the participants' narration revealed opposing discourses and ambiguities. For instance, the leader in the data bit from the interview round drew up a storyline complicit with authoritative discourses concerning universities as non-real places outside of everyday life, occupied by researchers that deal with abstract theoretical concepts that often do not apply to any reality. This is accounted for as countering the everyday work practices in the leader's organization in which things are messier and less systematic. Simultaneously, he positioned himself as the good student and research participant expressing how a model (Deetz's quadrant model; Deetz, 2001) and theoretical reflections presented in the opening lecture are interesting and give a realization on a meta-level that is beneficial in his everyday leadership practices. As such, these discourses are seen to counter one another and co-emerge in interaction as part of doing identity.

The aforementioned analytical findings tap into how meaning-making, identity work and knowledge production are incoherent, non-linear and ambiguous phenomena that are co-accomplished in interaction (cf. the philosophy of *heteroglossia*).

Zooming out: trailing connections from the discourse analyses

In the concluding remarks, I discuss how the ethnographic analysis provides insights into the strength of the scenic incumbency and how the two very different pre-set interactional setups invite the research participants to interact in quite different ways. Subject positions are worked up differently in the enactment of the two diverse qualitative methods, hence furthering quite different lines of subjectification and forces of interaction. Methods such as a rather researcher-controlled interview setup that are often employed in qualitative research and consultancy work (at least interview setups that resemble the one purchased in the forum) seem to restrain (cf. centripetal force) and make the multivoiced and dissensus-based dialogical aspirations difficult to enact. On the contrary, the dialogue round seems to further the intended plurivocal ideals to a higher degree. Attached to the interview round was a pre-scripted role distribution model whereas the dialogue round had no such pre-defined roles, leading me to ponder whether plurivocal dissensus-based participatory research processes require a brand new set of qualitative methods worked up (bottom up) in participatory processes. I note

how such hypothetical procedures could very well follow and further the acquired changes in organizational mind-sets to adopt thoughts of dialogicality as laid out in paper 2 (Bager, 2014) and Chapter two. Such new sets of procedures and knowledge forms can possibly inform future designs within plurivocal and dissensus-based participatory research setups and consultancy work with the aim to create more egalitarian and multivoiced designs.

MAIN ANALYTICAL FINDINGS FROM A POSITIONING EXERCISE AND A FEEDBACK ROUND

Paper 5, *Embodied positioning/discourse analysis of a research based leadership development forum: showing identity as in situ accomplishment*, (Bager, submitted), reflects my analysis of two diverse interactional setups as part of the positioning exercise in action 2. These are highlighted in the model below:

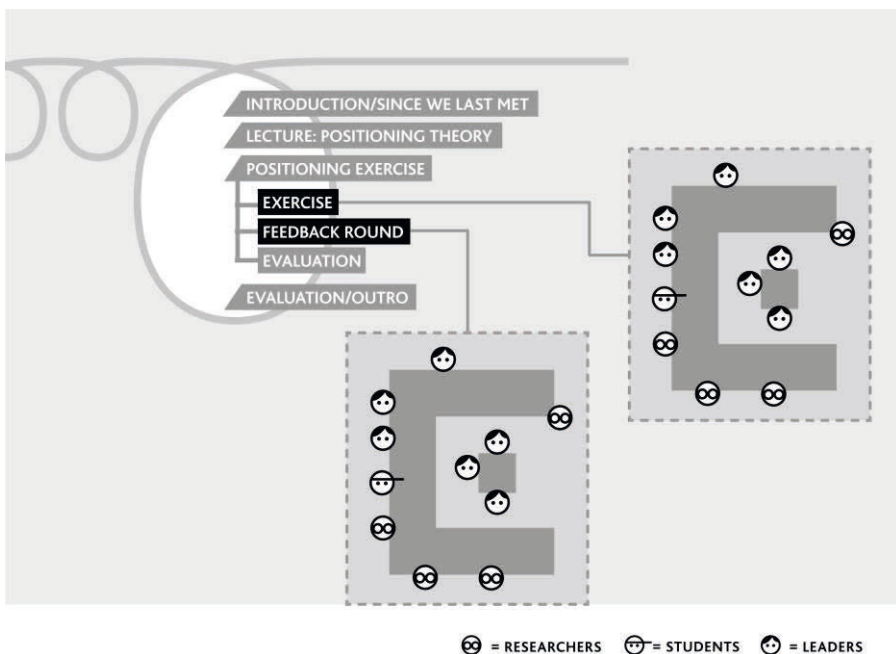


Figure 19: Process model of action 2 highlighting two embodied setups as part of the positioning exercise.

I acquire a similar close-up analytical frame as presented in paper 4. As mentioned in the process analysis in Chapter three, we intended for the positioning exercise to meet the demands and themes inferred by the research team on the basis of utterances and voices emerging from the data produced in action 1. It follows a lecture setup on positioning theory and is a means to further that the participants

gain a *knowing how* feeling with the positioning theoretical concepts represented in the lecture (cf. *knowing that*). The goal of the positioning exercise was to invite three leaders (primary co-present interlocutors) to dialogue on their everyday leadership experiences in relation to what they had just heard about positioning theory. The remaining participants (secondary co-present others) were to listen and prepare feedback to the three leaders on what went on in the exercise in terms of positioning theory, for use in the subsequent feedback round. I will now tap into the main findings from the close-up discourse analysis.

The positioning exercise

The model below pictures the embodied encounter in the positioning exercise:



Figure 20: Contour picture of the positioning exercise in action 2 (in Bager, submitted – paper 5).

The particularities of this interactional setup are noted to reveal a rather controlled and complex audience setup. As such, the interactional patterns came close to what we saw in the previous interview round. It was also characterized by an imbalanced verbal activity distribution, insofar as only some of the co-present others were verbally active in pre-defined parts. In this incidence, the leader-trio were verbally active, which afforded them speaking positions while the remaining co-present others held listening positions. Contrary to the interview setup, it was up to the leaders to facilitate and take charge of the storyline unfolding. Therefore, the three leaders were positioned as experts both in being in charge of dialogue and in having knowledge on everyday leadership experience. The verbally inactive co-present others were either listening or taking notes. As a result, a slight change in the pre-set role distribution model is detected that differs from that in the introduction and interview round in which the researchers were seen to take charge. This also gives

space for practice-bound voices to enter the scene, even though some of the leaders several times refer to theoretical perspectives presented earlier on that day. It can be seen to slightly change the pre-defined expert and knowledge hierarchy which can be compared to the noted change in the participation order in the dialogue round. They both are seen to differ from the pre-set participation and interaction order in the introduction and in the interview round.

The feedback session



Figure 21: Contour picture of a feedback session as part of the positioning exercise in action 2 (in Bager, submitted – paper 5).

In this feedback session, the primary speakers shifted so that the verbal interaction involved some of the earlier inactive participants (observers and feedback givers). In this situation, one of the previously verbally inactive participants (a researcher) began narrating meta communicatively about what went on in the exercise addressed to the leader-trio in terms of positioning theoretical perspectives. This constitutes a traditional feedback round. The interactional pattern can be said to reinstate the aforementioned expert and knowledge hierarchy, positioning the researcher as the knowledgeable theorist and the expert who was to evaluate and judge, through positioning theoretical perspectives, what took place in the positioning exercise and in the leader's small story efforts. Once again a researcher is positioned in an expert role that is to help the leaders and provide theoretical and analytical insights.

The pre-determined activity positions and the material setup are again seen to play important roles in constituting the situation as active participation in a task, thereby enacting the intended principles in the *positioning exercise* as a part of the research setup.

In both setups, the interactive flow of turns constitutes a rather polite and well-structured conversational pattern with an imbalanced verbal activity distribution, insofar as only some of the co-present others are verbally active in pre-defined parts (similar to the patterns in the interview round). Throughout the present action 2, however, all participants were verbally active from time to time. This sometimes positioned the leaders in speaking positions and sometimes the researchers, thereby placing the remaining co-present others in listening positions. This shapes who are the experts in certain dimensions of the setup: the leaders in accounting for practice-based leadership experiences and the researchers in giving feedback and mastering of *knowing how* analytical competencies in relation to positioning theory (*knowing that*).

Once again, the participants are positioned in sync with pre-defined role definitions, and everybody plays an important role in being-doing (human and non-human) a participant in a task and enacting good workshop and research participants, hence maintaining the pre-set participation and interaction order.

I note that the audience setup, like the one attached to the interview round, seems to mean that there is a lot at stake in terms of identity in keeping up appearances and doing suitable face work (Goffman, 2005). For instance, the interlocutors who are positioned in speaking and expert positions have to keep up good appearances not only toward one another but also toward the peripheral co-present others and in relation to the embedded research aims and anticipatory events. This may partly explain why the interactional pattern remains relatively polite and well-structured.

Zooming out: trailing connections from the discourse analysis

As part of the concluding remarks, I discuss what we might learn from the close-up analysis of situated encounters in organizational development settings and why it is crucial to examine the consequences of such encounters. For instance, I claim that researchers and change agents may become more ethically responsible and may want to contribute to the design of egalitarian and plurivocal development practices. I do so by inviting them to take closer looks at their own dialogic practices as means for evaluating and for potential future adjustments according to ideals, aims and appropriateness.

THE OVERALL CLOSE-UP ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

All close-up discourse analyses reveal how consciousness, meaning, discourse and subjectivity are part of dialogue, and how they arise within dialogue. Hence the analyses provide analytical and empirical support to my theoretical reflections in Bager (2013 – paper 1, 2014 – paper 2) on how these phenomena are not carried into situations as pre-given and pre-social commodities by already fixed speakers and subjects from the outside (as perceived in the aforementioned liberal humanistic approach to dialogue). The findings show how meaning and subjectivity

are co-produced by the full embodied social interaction of all participants and voices from within and without the creative event. In short, the analyses provide insights into the ambiguous, non-coherent and tensional aspects of embodied meaning-making and co-construction of identity and knowledge.

The pre-defined activity agendas in the setups can be said to hamper the centripetal forces of interaction, eclipsing spontaneous flows of activity that might otherwise break with what has been decided in advance. However, the interactional patterns and meaning-making practices (in some occasions more than others) allow the co-emergence of opposing discourses within organizational, leadership and language studies. The present of opposing discourses indicate that the participants can contest and re-position despite the pre-scripts (Langenhove & Harré, 1999) each other's perspectives as well as refine their own views as the participants accommodate surpluses of seeing through interaction. In short, it creates a space for the centripetal and diversifying forces of interaction and the accommodation of otherness. Some of the setups hamper the centripetal forces more while others further the centrifugal forces of interaction.

In all three papers, the analyses show how important it is to take embodiment and materiality into account. The physical settings frame the five diverse setups and play important parts in the co-production of meaning, knowledge and identity.

Trajectories of meta-levels, other-orientation and temporal multiplicity

The interactional patterns in all setups are seen to form diverse trajectories of meta-levels, other-orientation and temporal multiplicity. The following model reflects empirical and analytical examples of such trajectories inferred from the positioning exercise:

Trajectories of meta-levels, other-orientation and temporal multiplicity:

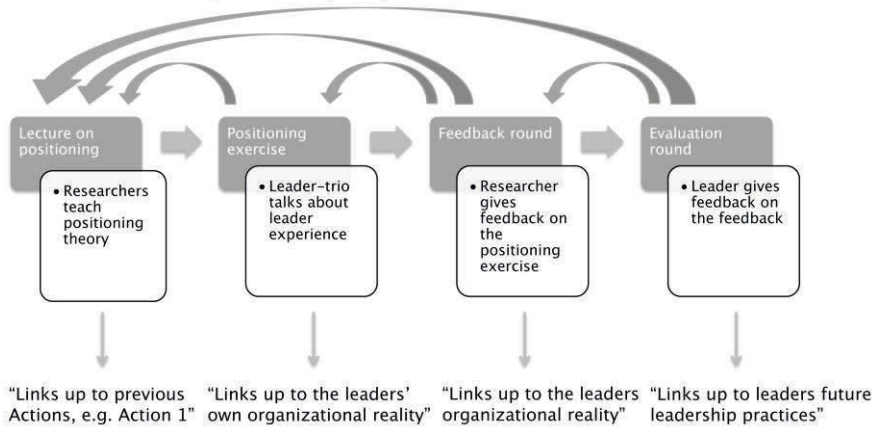


Figure 22: Trajectories of meta-levels, other-orientation and temporal multiplicity (in Bager, submitted – paper 5).

The model depicts how the interlocutors in the different setups as part of the positioning exercise orient toward third parties from earlier events, from outside the creative event and from an anticipated future. Some of these other-orientation efforts orient toward incidences in the previous setups in the positioning exercise, thus showing how several meta-communicative levels emerge, which is seen to constitute a traditional feedback round. Thus, the analysis unveils how a complex play of other-orientation and temporal multiplicity unfolds as a part of “doing identity” in the leadership forum.

So, the overall analytical findings picture (organizational) meaning-making and identity work as co-created phenomena worked up in communicative processes engendering complex plays of other-orientation, small story efforts and category-bound co-accomplishments. Thereto interaction and the participants’ small story efforts sometimes prompted the co-creation of often competing discourses on for instance leadership — and the battles between them. These findings underlines the importance of taking such complex and ambiguous aspects of meaning-making into account in interaction analysis and in the design of spaces that aspire to further the accommodation of otherness (e.g. learning and participatory designs). Approaches that foreground linear and coherent features of meaning-making and identity work miss out on important features and mechanisms in the heteroglossic nature of the language of life (cf. dialogicality).

THE RESEARCH PROCESS: A RESEMIOTIZATION PROCESS

THE OVERALL ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

I have now presented two analyses representing two diverse perceptive distances. The process analysis gave insights into decision-making practices encircling the leadership forum as an AR project. This analysis was based on a diversity of modes produced in the research activities leading up to the forum in addition to accounts and textual resemiotizations produced by the participants in the actual dialogic encounters. We saw how the resemiotization process prompted pre-set participation positions and a pre-scripted expert/knowledge hierarchy. We also got an idea of how this pre-defined role distribution mode was acted out in the design and which semiotics and accounts this gave rise to in action. As such, this analysis represents a descriptive gaze arising from text-based modes and resemiotizations of the dialogic encounters. This perceptive analytical distance can be said to miss out on the embodied dimension in the leadership forum – something the following close-up discourse analysis encompass.

The close-up discourse analyses (undertaken in papers 3, 4 and 5) provide closer looks into the embodied meaning-making practices in five various interactional setups in the forum. They zoom in on identity work in situ, giving insights into the lines of subjectification prompted in situ. This brings insights into embodied concreteness that was not captured by the research team's processing of data based on language and text resemiotizations of the dialogic encounters. Hence the analysis of the research process as resemiotization activities can now be stretched to encompass the embodied discursive co-accomplishments in situ. From these analyses we have seen how the pre-set expert and knowledge hierarchy, addressed in the process analysis in Chapter three, shows through in the dialogic encounters. Thus the modes produced in the leading up part of the process, and from the inferred positioning of research ideals and participant positions, seem to be resemiotized into the concrete embodied actions. Even though parts of the embodied encounters analysed are seen to slightly break with these pre-scripts, it is still my overall conclusion from the close-up analysis and from viewing thorough all the video data that the pre-scripted expert and knowledge hierarchy is predominantly maintained throughout the activities in the leadership forum. It is worth noticing that the pre-set knowledge and expert hierarchy and the inferred participant positions are not a natural part of the dissensus-based research agenda within dialogic studies (Deetz, 2001). As elaborated in part of Chapter one and as I will return to in the following chapter, the ideals derived from the dialogic tradition of AR, based on Habermasian thoughts, have an inbuilt quest for consensus. As such, the overall ethnographic analysis provided glances into an attempt to activate plurivocal and dissensus-based ideals on a stage where we might not yet realize the full implications of such (cf. the aforementioned change in organizational attitude) and therefore drew in tools for action that turned out to not quite meet the demands of dialogic studies.

The offered ideal of the foregrounding of practice voices and the leaders' accounts of everyday work experiences (e.g. in the invitation) and the bottom up aspirations seem to be eclipsed in certain parts of the forum. This was in particular found in the opening lecture in which theoretical voices were seen to eclipse the emergence of the invited practice voices. As noted in Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), the theoretical voices and discourses, for instance, a model presented as a part of the introduction (Deetz's quadrant; Deetz, 2001) were also taken up in later conversations. The model was used to place the ongoing topic in the quadrangles they became familiar with at the beginning of the first day. As we also note and as elaborated further in Bager (accepted – paper 4), this shows that the participants were competent in doing-being good students, that they were familiar with the situated practice in focus, that is, they enacted the category and position of being good students. However, after going through the video data, I started viewing their continuous reference to the Deetz quadrangle as a rather centripetal phenomenon that stopped them from exploring other avenues or possibilities. In the following chapter I zoom out and trace connections to boarder discursive circumstances based on the presented analytical findings.

CHAPTER 5

ZOOMING OUT: TRAILING CONNECTIONS FROM THE ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

Looking back at the analyses in previous chapters, a range of possible zooming-out movements as part of trailing connections to broader circumstances become pertinent. In this chapter, I choose to unfold five aspects that I find particularly interesting to discuss and that offer anticipated future research activities. These discussions serve to answer the part of my research question on *which implications plurivocal dialogue has for organizational and leadership studies* arising from the overall analytical findings. First, I foreground how leadership is painted as a paradoxical, tensional and complex phenomenon and place this within certain perspectives within recent leadership studies and literature. Second, I display how the analyses support critique of the ideals derived from dialogic AR and its tools for action. This directs me to the third reflection on how plurivocal, dissensus-based and participatory research strategies might call for a new set of research procedures and tools for action to enact the research aspirations. The fourth aspect addresses a catch-22 within dialogism and points toward monologizing tendencies within the research community. Finally, I present an ethics of dialogue. Thereof the chapter places the analyses against broader circumstances and theoretical and philosophical perspectives mentioned in Chapter two as part of the multithreaded dialogic fabric of the thesis. It further points toward future research activities which I will discuss further in Chapter six as a part of an anticipated methodological frame for doing discourse activism.

Emerging discourses picture leadership as a complex, paradoxical and tensional phenomenon

As noted in Bager (accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), the diversity of discourses that emerge in the leadership forum paint leadership as an ambiguous, contradiction-filled, paradoxical and tensional phenomenon. To give an example from Bager (submitted – paper 5), a participant, as part of the positioning exercise, invoked two discourses tapping into dominant and often competing discourses within organizational and leadership literature: 1) the charismatic leader who is able to lead and make her employees do certain things through rather manipulative ways of communicating; and 2) the considerate, cautious and care-taking leader that nurtures her employees and coaches them to feel secure for instance in times of change and cost savings, and leads them into new landscapes, focusing on contextual circumstances and the mood and characteristics of the employees being led. The former is seen to relate to a rationalist, functionalist view of discourse, communication and organization, which Deetz (2001) terms as *functionalistic studies*. The latter relates to an emergent, context-dependent and ambiguous view which Deetz (2001) terms *dialogic studies*. In several incidences in the leadership

forum, participants invoked such opposing and competing discourses within dominant leadership literature in narrating their own leadership experiences. This is noted to tap into perspectives within leadership and organizational studies and literature that embrace such paradoxical and tensional aspects as premises in organizational reality (e.g. Bager, 2014 - paper 2; Fogsgaard & Elmholt, 2014; Iedema, 2003, 2007; Rennison, 2011, 2014). These scholars paint organizational contexts as often characterized by contradictory voices, perspectives, discourses and diverse areas of tensions, and they can be said to belong to a postmodern and poststructuralist research field (cf. dialogical studies; Deetz, 2001).

This paradoxical and ambiguous picture of leadership practices emerging in the data and representations from the dialogic encounters in the leadership forum seem to break with mainstream tendencies within contemporary organizations. Such are increasingly streamlined and made more efficient and exposed to the functionalistic management tools and empowering techniques that accompany an advanced liberal state (Karlsen & Villadsen, 2008). These techniques seem to represent monologizing forces and incite to narrow down the complexities immanent in organizational dialogue which often do not fit the realities and needs in complex, ambiguous and paradoxical everyday work life, as reflected in the participants' small story efforts in the leadership forum. In Bager (2014 – paper 2), I further argue (piggybacking on arguments from a range of organizational scholars) that soft management terms such as “dialogue” often seem to cover up less appealing discourses and opposed ideologies – for instance, principles from New Public Management (Bager, 2014; Bager & Mølholm, submitted). This taps into the mentioned (Chapter two) chasms between organizational doings and sayings and the research's aim to bring back in the real and try to bridge such gaps in order to support more plurivocal and egalitarian organizational practices.

Discourse pictures leadership as serious and critical business

Another discourse that emerges in the forum frames leadership as serious and critical business with attached consequences. This discourse is based on strings and chains of utterances and voices found in the condensed video data and the silent witness reports (Appendix 4, 7). For instance, leadership was uttered to “be on thin ice” with the acknowledgement that a leader often has to “watch one's steps” and be “highly aware of one's actions”. Statements such as “I must constantly answer for my conduct”, “I go to great lengths to meet my employees' demands”, “a leader needs to thrive on being in a cross-pressure” and “sometimes I feel I disappear” all indicate tensional, ambiguous and serious aspects that are detectable in the participants' account of their experience from being leaders in their everyday work life practices. This discourse relates to the aforementioned (Chapter three) overexposure and over-responsibilization of the leader role as addressed in Bager (2014 – paper 2) and by Rennison (2011, 2014).

It seems pivotal to encompass and study the above-mentioned paradoxical and critical aspects of leadership in anticipated future participatory research activities as part of developing new knowledge on and engendering possible changes in leadership communicative practices. As part of a dissensus-based approach, such phenomena are viewed as constructive and creative forces that can possibly enhance and challenge existing organizational structures in order to create new and more plurivocal ones (cf. dialogic studies; Deetz, 2001). Dialogicality further invites us to view aspects of organizational meaning-making as co-accomplishments produced in ongoing processes involving accommodation of otherness which also applies to the phenomenon of leadership communication and the implications it has for practice. Following this view, we can place the consequences of leadership in its sociopolitical and context-dependent circumstances (which is also in line with governmentality). This contextualization can possibly change the perception of the leader position and help take some of the pressure off each leader's shoulders to create a more comprehensible leader work life. Instead of directing the blame from an organization's challenges toward the individual and seeing these as errors that should be fixed in order to reinstate imagined states of organizational harmony and consensus (cf. the mainstream liberal humanistic approaches to dialogue and meaning-making, see Chapter two; cf. consensus-based research approaches; Deetz, 2001), it would be potent to shift focus toward the power-infused and ambiguous organizational circumstances in and out of which the challenges and problems first emerged.

The findings further underline the importance of taking such complex and ambiguous aspects of meaning-making into account in interaction analysis and in the future anticipated design of spaces that aspire to further the accommodation of otherness (e.g. learning and participatory designs). Approaches that foreground linear and coherent features of meaning-making and identity work miss out on important features and mechanisms in the heteroglossic nature of the language of life (cf. dialogicality).

Critique of the principles from the dialogic tradition of action research

In Bager (2014 – paper 2), I discuss, from a theoretical and idealistic perspective and through the lens of dialogicality, how the ideals drawn from the dialogic tradition of AR possibly enrol the design of the leadership forum in a pre-scripted role-distribution model. I note how this will most likely affect the research process, the space of possible actions and the lines of subjectification that are likely to unfold (cf. *dispositifs* and *authoritative discourses*).

The Habermasian inspiration is clearly detectable in the dialogic tradition's common designs for fostering larger organizational democratic change processes such as in their models for *dialogue conferences* and *search conferences* (Frimann & Bager, 2012; Gustavsen, 1992b, 2007). As already mentioned, the democratic research team acquired the role and distribution model from this tradition's ideals

for such conference designs. I noted in Chapter two and in Bager (2014 – paper 2) the overreliance on imagined designed spaces in which rational subjects would be capable of evaluating each other's voices and discourses solely based on reason and evidence in an atmosphere free of any non-rational influential power mechanisms (Bager, 2014 - paper 2; Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Frimann & Bager, 2012). These ideals also tend to rely on all participants in such spaces to be motivated solely by the desire to achieve a rational consensus. In Bager (2014 – paper 2), I offered a preview of how Bakhtinian dialogicality can challenge the dialogic tradition's heritage from critical hermeneutics and more precisely from a Habermasian framing of dialogue, and the aspirations to stage ideal speech situations in organizational power-infused contexts. This view is clearly in opposition with a Bakhtinian (and Foucauldian) framing of meaning-making practices, as rational spaces with attached rational subjects in this perspective would be a pipe dream. Such rational social spaces with coherent and rationally enrolled subjects in coherently steered decision-making processes can never be achieved as subjects are fundamentally dialogic. Tensions, irrationalities, incoherence and a multiplicity of diverse and often contradictory voices and discourses are premises in whatever social and identity creative action we might engage in (cf. Bakhtin's philosophy of *heteroglossia*). As I have shown in the close-up discourse analysis, the meaning-making practices foster complex trajectories of other-orientation, meta-levels and temporal multiplicity in which the participants work up and co-create discourses and accommodate otherness and surpluses of seeing by invoking a contradictory set of voices and discourses. These findings picture subjects, identity work and meaning-making practices as anything but rational, linear and coherent.

Looking back at the process analysis in combination with the close-up embodied discourse analytical findings, the critique becomes even more pertinent as we have seen how these ideals and role prescriptions show through in action. For instance, they shine through in the resemiotization of the research ideals into the leadership strip (Figure 3) and the process model (Figure 4), giving rise to a pre-set expert and knowledge hierarchy. This is, for instance, detectable in the researchers' enactments of doing-being known theorists in the opening lecture; here, the researchers set the scene for the pre-determined role and expert hierarchy as they lay out the line for the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) already in the very beginning of the participatory research activities constituting the leadership forum. They draw on knowledge forms and known procedures that follow suit with the *authoritative discourses* and *dispositifs* stemming from participatory research approaches in combination with the ambition to enact dialogic studies. As seen in Chapter three, this invited several leaders to participate in what can be framed as a traditional teaching setup in which the researchers knew of theory and the leaders were there to be taught and gain knowledge from the more knowledgeable researchers. Naturally, this was also a consequence of the university setting in which the forum was situated. As we note in Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), we realized just how powerful the scenic incumbency can be, as the researchers seemed to naturally take on the well-known role as teachers that teach the participants and students about theories and their implications. They also

naturally position themselves as the ones in charge of the research process and aims that they are to present to the participants. I wonder what would have happened if the participants had opposed these pre-determining positioning activities performed and induced by the researchers.

As we aspired to open up a space that invites voices from practice, together with the leaders' accounts of everyday experience to enter into and direct the plurivocal dissensus-based co-production of knowledge on leadership communicative practicing, this way of kicking off the leadership forum may in retrospect not be the best way to achieve such research ideals. However, as the close-up analyses show, the interactional setups were not all seen to hamper the centripetal forces as clearly as the opening scene. For instance, part of the positioning exercise in action 2 prompted interactional spaces in which the participants battled and accommodated otherness and in which practice voices entered the scene. This indicates how the evaluative and processual scope of AR processes, as elaborated in Chapter three, prompted that we in action 2 engaged a more plurivocal and looser design than in action 1. This was based on the research team's evaluation of action 1 and decisions on giving more space for centrifugal and diversifying forces and practice voices in the design of action 2. However, as noted in Chapter four, the opening scene in action 1 is viewed as a crucial event that penetrates and directs dialogue throughout the rest of the research process and thereby makes it more difficult to break the attached lines of subjectification. Thereto the evaluative process did not prompt change of the pre-set role distribution model, allowing a less researcher-controlled setup and the possibility of alternative participation orders to emerge.

It is obvious that we in the democratic research team did not realize that the acquirement of ideals from the dialogic tradition did not go hand in hand with the intentions of doing *dialogic studies* as laid out by Deetz (2001). The mentioned quest for a rational consensus, following the heritage from Habermasian thinking, is inconsistent with such studies. As already noted, we drew on tools for action that we knew in advance and that we presumed suited the plurivocal and dissensus-based ideals. This can be a consequence of the time pressure that we experience in university settings, so that we did not have, or take, the needed time to examine these ideals. However, it may very well be a consequence of our not having quite grasped what the dissensus-based and plurivocal ideals actually entail. I definitely have had what can be called a lesson in how difficult it is to embrace and handle the change in attitude, noted in Chapter two, that dialogicality demands and what it acquires to put these thoughts into concrete actions.

In future participatory collaborative research processes based on plurivocal and dissensus-based ideals, it becomes important to acquire tools for action that meet the research demands more than the ones we chose in the democratic research team. In Bager (2014 – paper 2), I suggest that participatory researchers acquire a looser and less researcher-controlled participation frame that do not apply a pre-scripted role cast and might invite alternative frames to emerge in dialogue. Further I discuss how the term *position* highlights the intrinsically dialogic and emergent

nature of interaction as opposed to the pre-determined and static character of *role*¹⁵. The theatre metaphor's attached roles indicate that participants act from a script with certain pre-authored lines. By letting participant positions emerge in plurivocal processes, a possible distribution model and participatory positions can be dialogically and polyphonically negotiated among all participants. Through staged dialogue, new plurivocal knowledge can emerge about how to stage and enact research-based plurivocal dialogue as the means for knowledge co-production on leadership communication. This can possibly cause participants to be treated as subjects in processes and cultivate the aforementioned dialogic wisdom (Barge & Little, 2002). It further marks a shift away from the traditional focus on privileged researchers toward an understanding of all participants as *co-authors* of such issues. I note how such methodological moves might avoid what is addressed as a *participation paradox* or *participation conformity*, meaning that participatory and action researchers tend to induce their own norms of participation upon others (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2013).

In need of a new set of plurivocal and dissensus-based tools for action?

On the basis of the analytical findings and as noted in Bager (accepted – paper 4), it is worth noticing how difficult it seems to be to stay multivoiced when employing well-known developmental methods such as a complex interview setup that directs and governs the interaction and the lines of subjectification that it allows. I note whether the plurivocal and dissensus-based aspirations in developmental and learning settings call for a brand new set of research resources and methods that break the traditional norms, authoritative discourses and *dispositifs* to enact the ideal of *heteroglossia*. This discussion becomes even more pertinent from looking at the overall research findings. From these, we see how we in the democratic research team naturally drew in well-known qualitative methods that we thought suited the diversifying ideals. In retrospect, I conclude that some of these qualitative methods as unfolded in dialogue hampered the direct opposite and unifying forces (cf. centripetal forces).

This is not to be understood as if I claim that all methods employed are to open up for diversity and centrifugal forces, as both forces are simultaneously present and serve diverse aims in interaction. Staying in line with dialogicality, as also noted by Phillips (2011), means that all organizational decision-making practices have to straddle both centrifugal and centripetal forces. For instance, Linell (2009) mentions that our daily lives have to close down dialogue for practical reasons even though dialogue in a Bakhtinian sense is never finalized and remains ongoing. Nevertheless, it becomes pivotal to scrutinize methods applied and their consequences in order to balance both centrifugal and centripetal forces and make

¹⁵ This point is supported in the literature and research approaches on discursive psychology and positioning theory, to which small story analysis belongs.

sure that they allow space for practice voices. It is worth mentioning that the dialogue round without an attached pre-scripted role cast seems to provide more space for practice voices to enter the scene. Looser and less researcher-controlled methods can potentially be acquired, developed and activated to further the plurivocal and diversifying research ideals.

A catch-22 within dialogicality?

The unfolded zooming out connections that the analyses so far have given rise to lead me to ponder what might be a catch-22 within dialogism. Dialogism seems to have the inbuilt paradox of how to stay plurivocal and open toward a multiplicity of voices and discourses stemming from *dispositifs* and *authoritative discourses* that it by its nature opposes and tries to avoid (cf. dialogisms contestation of monologic and uniforming approaches and endorsement of diversifying and dialogic approaches). I believe that this so-called catch-22 arrives from within procedures and knowledge forms attached to the *dispositifs* and *authoritative discourses* governing research practicing and the very nature of doing good and a fine piece of research craftsmanship. This traditionally involves a clear positioning according to which knowledge regime and which tools for action we thereby employ. In performing research, we historically tend to eclipse that other perspectives and framings might apply and thereof close down for diversity.

For instance, and as mentioned as part of Chapter two, Shotter (1999) points to how a traditional Cartesian conception foregrounds individual states of meaning-making and eclipses the idea of socially interconnected consciousnesses, meaning-making and identity as dependent on the embodied features of interaction and otherness, as represented in Bakhtinian thinking. Ryle (1945) addresses what he terms *category errors* within the research community in which he also opposes the dominating Cartesian dualism between body and mind from which we tend to foreground *knowing that* over *knowing how* dimensions of meaning-making, thus prioritizing conceptualizations and theorizing over practical knowledge. As Foucault further points out, the history of governmental subjectification processes and formations of discourses divide and objectivize subjects into dichotomies and categories (e.g. mad/sane, sick/healthy; Foucault, 1982), thus rendering particular knowledge types, discourses and their attached consequences within the normal and more attractive and compelling rather than their opposites. These perspectives indicate that monologizing and centripetal forces historically tend to eclipse the centrifugal and diversifying forces that include a multiplicity of voices and perspectives to battle, co-exist and co-emerge. Building on these Foucauldian thoughts, Agamben (2009) puts forward similar ideas claiming that we in today's society witness a massive flood of desubjectifying apparatuses (Agamben's English translation of *dispositifs*). This discussion is supported by traditional mainstream tendencies within organizational practicing, as mentioned in Chapter two, whereas for instance monologizing and individual-oriented perspectives on meaning-making, dialogue

and identity are historically pointed out to have foreclosed more diverse and dialogic perspectives.

In line with Foucauldian thinking, power is a subtle and sly mechanism that operates in the midst of a complex play of embodied discursive mechanisms that are directed by historical, habitual, socially created discourses and procedures that often are invisible to the immediate eye. Its compelling touch seduces us in our everyday deeds to perform actions with attached opaque consequences often without a second thought. Power is basically neither positive nor negative, but the effect lies in the concrete conducts in everyday life in which power inevitably is embedded and incites what ought to take place: it is held by no particular person or group of people, it is placed nowhere in particular and we ourselves are part of our own subjectification (Foucault, 1982).

It seems to require a meticulous analytical and reflexive shrewdness and unwrapping of the concrete actualization of power mechanisms to grasp and to possibly transform monologizing and unifying procedures that exclude some voices and discourses rather than others. This leaves us with the million-dollar question of how to break with and escape the lines of subjectification that are embedded in governing force relations and research-based as well as organizational procedures in order to foster plurivocal and diverse organizational practices. Of course, there is neither a simple nor one right answer to this question. In the following, I argue for an ethics of dialogue that addresses optimism toward our abilities to change dominating force relations. I also argue how organizational researchers and change agents have an ethical demand to try to change desubjectifying and monologizing practices.

An ethics of dialogue

As already indicated in Chapter two, Bakhtinian and Deleuzian thinking represents an optimism and invitation toward our possibilities and answerability to actually change dominant *authoritative discourses* and *dispositifs*. Bakhtin clearly expresses a normative hope and invitation to transform authoritative discourses by opening up for diversifying forces of interaction (cf. centrifugal forces) as he endorses dialogism in order to contest monologic authoritative discourses that close down and allow space for certain voices and discourses rather than others (Bakhtin, 1982). On the same note, Deleuze calls for us to find *new weapons* to deal with the challenges that follow suit with formations of discourses in his conceptualization of *today's society of control* (Deleuze, 1995). As elaborated in Bager (accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5), Deleuze's idea of contemporary society has transformed from what Foucault (1995) described as a *society of discipline* into that of *control* which incorporates its subjects into new and ever-changing lines of subjectification. This induces transformation of *dispositifs* (Deleuze, 1992; Foucault, 1980) and *authoritative discourses* (Bakhtin, 1982) that compose (and are composed of) a contemporary way to live out society: thus new types of force

relations, of embodied organizational knowledge and ways of organizing, are produced which have consequences for how subject positions are (re)configured in everyday corporate lives.

As a result, both Bakhtinian philosophy of *heteroglossia* and Deleuzian philosophy of *dispositif* invite us to challenge the taken-for-granted knowledge forms and procedures engendered in monologic *authoritative discourse* and *dispositifs* (Bager, accepted – paper 4, submitted – paper 5; Bager et al, in review – paper 3; Bager & Mølholm, submitted). These invitations orient toward the becoming of something new and possibly more plurivocal and less desubjectifying (organizational) practices. It calls for an ethics of dialogue in which organizational researchers and change agents have a responsibility and answerability to engage in the transformation of monologizing *dispositifs* and *authoritative discourses* and open up to otherness and centrifugal forces of organizational meaning-making. When we engage in and produce discourse, we automatically serve as mediators who dialogue and battle with a diversity of often opposing discourses following suit with diverse *dispositifs* and *authoritative discourses*. Significantly, dialogue does not allow passiveness; rather, it demands ethical responsible subjects that have *no alibi in being* (Bakhtin, 1993). Human activity always supposes addressees and their responsible responses, as every deed has to answer for its unique effect in the real world.

In this thesis, I have observed dialogic practices in the participatory research process and found examples where the procedures and methods applied did not fulfil the demands of the research team's espoused dissensus-based and plurivocal research ideals. Thus, the interactional patterns furthered unifying and centripetal forces of interaction more than we intended and ended up reproducing monologic procedures and knowledge forms attached to *authoritative discourses* and *dispositifs* that we in the first place intended to transform. Several scholars point to how similar monologizing mechanisms set through in a diversity of decision-making practices throughout society (see Chapter two). I believe that, supported by Bakhtinian (and Deleuzian) thinking, we (researchers and change agents) have a responsibility to try to transform such unifying and monologic practicing that tends to narrow down our abilities to act. When we have the abilities to critically study how such power mechanisms set through in a diversity of practices and explain how these are seen as incomprehensible and how they narrow down subjects' spaces of possibilities, we have an ethical responsibility and answerability to try to change these into possibly more egalitarian and multivoiced ones. I am aware that this move makes ethics into a rationality that also incites for particular actions and procedures to be operationalized that follow suit with certain dialogic and dissensus-supporting *authoritative discourses* and *dispositifs*. As elaborated in Bager, Jørgensen, and Raudaskoski (in review – paper 3), this orientation toward the new and an ethics of dialogue does not presuppose that we can break free of power mechanisms. I embrace that every attempt to try to break certain lines of subjectification into new ones is a plausible new step toward the emergence of new force relations supporting specific regimes of knowledge. However, I claim that, in

order to be ethically responsible researchers and change agents, we need to keep on looking at our own actions to study whether they actually produce the intended ideals – and, if not, attempt to change them accordingly.

CHAPTER 6

IN ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE RESEARCH

In this final chapter, I discuss what can be inferred from the research presented in the thesis, thus weaving the philosophical, theoretical and analytical threads and discussions laid out throughout the thesis closer together. I will provisionally complete the answer of the research question on *which implications plurivocal dialogue has for organizational and leadership studies*, this time providing my suggestions for a methodological frame for doing organizational discourse activism based on the inferred research points.

To recap my efforts so far, I have conducted an auto-ethnographic-inspired analysis of an AR process aimed to co-produce knowledge on leadership communicative practices. The forum was based on ideals of dissensus and plurivocality and was indented to follow Deetz's (2001) descriptions on dialogic studies in organizations. The ethnographic purview of questioning the taken-for-grantedness of everyday actions and critical descriptions of cultural practices involved a questioning of dialogic encounters as a naturally positive phenomenon with attached positive and emancipating outcomes. The framework for theorizing and scrutinizing the concrete dialogic situations in the leadership forum involved a multifaceted understanding of meaning-making as affected by a diversity of interrelated (re)constituent contextual circumstances. The framework was captured in my construction of the layered model (Figure 1). The diverse circumstances (layers in the model) that affect organizational meaning-making were further elaborated in the table in Figure 2. This table encompasses the diverse perspectives gathered in my eclectic and multi-perspectival analytical frame as means for capturing the heteroglossic nature of meaning-making. This eclectic and analytical framework, in combination with the methodological zooming-in and -out movements and selective re-positioning (Nicolini, 2009b), has proven to be potent in several dimensions: 1) it allowed me to straddle multiple dimensions of meaning-making, thus involving both close-up (cf. discourse¹), broader (cf. discourse²) and embodied discursive circumstances in the analysis and understanding of the dialogic encounters in the leadership forum; 2) it brought the concrete practices to the fore so that the inductive analysis of the situated dialogic practices in the forum gave direction to the synthesis of the thesis. Finally 3) it allowed zooming-out movements through which I traced connections to broader discursive circumstances based on analytical findings from the concrete situated practices, thus juxtaposing theory and practice. As such, this has provided a good basis for me to theorize and study plurivocal dialogue and discuss its implications for organizational and leadership studies. Thereto it points toward exiting anticipated research activities.

The recurring philosophical and theoretical assumptions building on Bakhtinian dialogicality supplemented with aspects from governmentality and organizational

discourse studies have given me a frame to perceive meaning-making and dialogue as situated spaces of *heteroglossia*. These involve a multiplicity of historical, situated, anticipated and culture-specific more or less opposing force relations, discourses, voices, utterances, official and unofficial consciousnesses. Identity and meaning are co-produced in a multi-play of a profound mass of (re)constituent third parties as we continuously accommodate otherness and surpluses of seeing through interaction with the alieness of the others strange perspectives (humans as non-humans). These fascinating, complex, ambiguous and paradoxical features of everyday (organizational) meaning-making have proven to be traceable in action. Even though we can never achieve a full picture and understanding of such, we can still gain insights into pivotal mechanisms, interactional patterns and lines of subjectification emerging in situ.

This analytical approach to the dialogic conduct in the leadership forum has displayed how we should not take too much for granted. In the research team, we acquired well-known tools for action that did not entirely suit the intended dissensus-based ideals. On the contrary, the embodied setups turned out to predominantly produce the opposing, unifying and centripetal forces that the research initially set out to oppose. As we have seen, the invited space for practice voices were opened up in certain setups and significantly narrowed down by theoretical voices in other crucial and direction setups (e.g. the introductory lecture setup). Thereto the interactional patterns followed suit with a pre-determined expert and knowledge hierarchy, positioning the researchers as experts and knowledgeable theorists that were in charge of the knowledge co-production and of teaching the leaders on theoretical aspects. The leaders were positioned as the ones being taught and in some incidences as experts on narrating the everyday aspects of their leadership practicing. The aspiration to bring the leaders' everyday stories on leadership to the fore did not overtly appear. The clear presence of theoretical voices closed down and directed the leaders' stories. The embodied interactional patterns were seen to be natural consequences of compelling sociopolitical circumstances and forces in university settings.

Part of the research findings support the mentioned perspectives in Chapter two, clarifying how taking on thoughts of dialogicality (cf. Dialogic studies; Deetz, 2001) requires mayor changes in organizational attitude. Such a change represents reflections that are fundamentally hard to grasp and operationalize and are therefore very different ways of perceiving meaning-making practices than traditional, well-known and more mainstream persuasive *authoritative discourses* and *dispositifs* governing organizational and leadership studies and practices. It became clear to me that we intended to engage a way of doing research and developing knowledge on leadership communication whose implications we did not quite grasp. We aspired to experiment with the dissensus-based and plurivocal ideals for doing organizational leadership development to oppose some of the critical aspects of development practices within organizational and leadership studies. We ended up with situated encounters that mostly enhanced the direct opposite ideals. With all this said, we still managed to tap into issues important and relevant to the leaders

and gained insights into critical aspects of leadership practicing that is interesting to study in future participatory dissensus-based and plurivocal research collaborations. We further succeeded with the dissensus-based and plurivocal research aspirations more in some settings rather than others, from which we can gain insights into future participatory research processes and design attempts for dissensus-based and plurivocal collaborative research processes.

The analyses in the present thesis are produced precisely in anticipation of future advancements in designing plurivocal and dissensus-based collaborative processes that open up for diversity. The analyses are accomplished with an aspiration to develop new techniques and procedures to further centrifugal forces and more egalitarian *dispositifs* while countering monologic approaches. This research follows Deleuze's (1995) invitation for us to look for new weapons to handle the desubjectifying mechanisms produced in his conceptualization of today's society of control. It furthers the Bakhtinian (1982) demand to open up to diversifying discourses and forces of interaction in the contestation of monologic discourses and knowledge regimes. Such close-up discourse analyses can bring about insights into which consequences identity-wise and which lines of subjectification diverse methods produce and from there direct which multivoiced future actions to take.

In the following, I discuss how the thesis's methodological moves in combination with some of the research findings can inform future enactment of organizational discursive activism.

Methodological framework for doing discourse activism

In Iedema's paper *A Philosophy of discourse in organizations* (submitted), he invites discourse researchers to enact *more direct, lived researcher-researched engagement*. This directive follows suit with his earlier encouragement of doing discourse activism, as mentioned in Chapter two. It indicates that discourse scholars ought to become actively involved in change processes involving discourse as an active component. He encourages discourse to take a more active, situated and developing position instead of a traditional, more distanced and timeless approach that he sees as performing claims about structural regularities to strengthen people's awareness of such but makes a reference to Latour (2004) when describing how they effectively "pulling the rug from underneath them".

The methodological analytical framework elaborated in the present thesis, in combination with the proposed ethics of dialogue, may very well be part of a framework for doing future organizational discourse activism. Staying in line with dialogicality, such a methodological framework will naturally support dissensus-based and plurivocal ideals for doing organizational and leadership participatory research processes. It will represent both a sceptical and a normative supportive approaching to dialogue with an immanent trust in the promise of dialogue and the furthering of more plurivocal practices. The presented analytical findings together

with the engaged theoretical and philosophical perspectives and the zooming-out connections gave rise to an invitation for an orientation toward the becoming of something new. It prepared the ground for the forming of an ethics of dialogue. This ethics of dialogue represents an optimism toward the transformation of unifying and governing *authoritative discourses* and *dispositifs*, and it invites organizational scholars to engage in reflexive and critical scrutiny of their own discursive practices and to use such analytical findings to develop more plurivocal and egalitarian organizational practices.

To secure evaluative features in such participatory research processes, the frame can productively draw on research ideals and procedures from AR, as for instance represented in the Lewinian (1946) processual principles for doing AR. These principles frame such processes as involving spirals of decision-makings that are to continuously evaluate and transform the future activities. Furthermore, the pragmatic ideal from AR is productive in securing that the content in future research encounters is relevant and based on emerging voices and utterances. AR also operates with methods such as journal keeping that enhance the participants' self-reflective competencies.

The discourse analytical frame in the thesis has proven to be potent to critically study dialogic practices involving broad, close-up and embodied discursive dimensions of meaning-making. It can be incorporated as part of participatory interventionist research processes in order to continuously analyse, reflect on and evaluate the research practices and possibly adjust aspects as the ongoing research activities unfold. It could be productive to continuously analyse and evaluate the dialogic practices according to the intended research aspirations in order to become smarter at designing plurivocal and dissensus-based settings. Thereto it could be interesting to experiment with research procedures that actively engage discourse analyses in participatory research processes. For instance, leaders could be involved in performing discourse analyses and in the interpretations and decisions on future actions based on the analytical findings. The involvement of the positioning theoretical perspectives followed by the positioning exercise in the forum seemed to further the participants' *knowing how* with the positioning theoretical concepts. Thereto the positioning theoretical reflections seemed to tap into important struggles that the leaders experience in their everyday work life. Thus, discourse perspectives embracing ambiguous and complex aspects of communication could potentially be involved.

Iedema (2007) unfolds how more interventionist discourse approaches call for new considerations on the relations between researchers and researched. In following a Bakhtinian framing and an ethics of dialogue, we may very well rethink how we traditionally engage participation frameworks. This avenue potentially opens up a looser and less researcher-controlled design in which all participants are co-authors of pivotal processual issues that do not pre-privilege researchers in expert positions but encourage a space in which theoretical voices are some among others in the battle with practice voices. It further encourages experimentation with new

procedures and designs for participatory dissensus-based and plurivocal research processes through which alternative participation positions and interactional orders can emerge.

In Foucauldian thinking, focus is on discourses in what he termed the discursive practices in science. To Foucault, the translation of discourses into everyday practices from the discursive (the field of science) to the non-discursive practices (everyday organizations and institutions) was assigned to a specific group of people in the regimes of appropriation (Bager & Møhlhilm, submitted). The distinction of the scientific discursive practices as opposed to non-discursive practices in, for instance, organizational work life indicates the researcher as distanced and non-involved in the everyday doings and transformations of organizations. It is limited to a specific group of individuals, to translate the discourses and implement them into decisions and actions in their everyday life. From a dialogic purview and keeping with the Bakhtinian (1982, 1993) philosophy of *heteroglossia*, Deleuzian's (1995) philosophy of *dispositif*, Iedema's (submitted) philosophy of discourse, Shotter's (2011) move from an analytical toward an ecological approach, and what I term an ethics of dialogue, different research positions and strategies are called upon. In these perspectives, the concrete processes of appropriation and the persons granted the rights to manage these can be laid out to involve organizational subjects that are treated as *subjects in processes* furthering *dialogic participation* rather than *monologic participation* (see Chapter two; Jabri et al., 2008). In such dialogic participatory research processes, the traditional Foucauldian discursive practices can be said to be expanded to involve everyday organizational members – which paints the participants (researchers and organizational members) in new and interesting positions. To avoid the way researchers enact *participation conformity* or the *participation paradox* of inducing their own participatory norms onto organizational members, all participants can be involved in processual decision-making.

Retrospective reflection for future actions

As mentioned, I became acquainted with the Bakhtinian pluralistic framing of meaning-making and dialogue after the completion of the leadership forum. My retrospective making sense of the research activities, dialogic conducts and organizational matters through this particular lens has been a crucial turning point for me. It helped me understand and come to terms with some of the somehow frustrating and emotional aspects of being part of a democratic research team in the sociopolitical context of a university setting. The combination of dialogicality with Foucauldian thinking has helped me grasp two important aspects of organizational matters that I understand as being two interrelated sides of the same coin: on the one hand the complex, ambiguous and contradictory aspects of local meaning-making and on the other the compelling and seductive power mechanisms that incite us to do specific things in particular contexts at certain times that do not always follow suit with our intended ideals. With these important insights as part of

my baggage, I look forward to engaging in new participatory research projects that can bring about surpluses of seeing and pivotal insights into leadership communication and at the same time experimenting with new ways of engaging plurivocal collaborative research activities. Naturally more research is needed for (organizational) participatory researchers and change agents to become continuously smarter at operationalizing the ideals of dissensus and plurivocality and to enact organizational discourse activism and the dialogic ethical ideals.

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SUMMARY

In this thesis Ann Starbæk Bager conducts research on organizational dialogic development practices. She scrutinizes and challenges the taken-for-grantedness of such as naturally positive phenomenon with attached positive, involving and emancipating outcomes. An in depth theorization of dialogue is offered through the lens of Bakhtinian dialogicality assisted by perspectives from Foucauldian governmentality and discourse studies and its implications for organizational and leadership studies are discussed. On this basis an ethnographic inspired analysis (a combined process and embodied discourse analysis) is conducted of dialogic practicing and identity work in a participatory dialogue, dissensus and research based leadership forum hosted in Danish university settings. Among other things the analysis pictures leadership as serious and complex phenomenon filled with ambiguities and paradoxes. It further reveals how in situ dialogic practices mainly are seen to eclipse, instead of the intended ideals of furthering, diversity and plurivocality. Based on analytical findings the author elaborates an ethics of dialogue and discusses an anticipated methodological framework for doing organizational discourse activism that seeks to further co-production of dissensus based and plurivocal knowledge and participatory development of leadership communicative practices.